

EARLY
MUSLIM POLITICAL THOUGHT
AND ADMINISTRATION

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STUDIES
IN THE HISTORY OF EARLY
MUSLIM POLITICAL THOUGHT
AND ADMINISTRATION

by

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PREFACE

THE "Studies" now presented to the public were originally meant only as illustration of what could be achieved in the field of the history of political ideas among the Muslims, and were not intended to be published in the form of a book. The appreciative insistence of friends has, however, now made me collect them together.

The material on which these "Studies" were based formed part of my papers which appeared in various Journals of the country such as the *Islamic Culture* of Hyderabad and the *Indian Journal of Political Science* of Allahabad. A part of chapter seven originally formed my contribution to the volume presented to Rajasevakta Diwan Bahadur Dr. S. Krishnaswamy Aiyangar on the occasion of his 61st Birthday, while the "Recapitulation" at the end of the volume was a paper read by me at the Eighth International Congress of Historical Science held at Zuerich in 1938. All these have now been revised and most of them entirely remodelled.

My best thanks are due to Shaikh Muḥammad

Ashraf for publishing the collection as also for arranging the correction of proofs in such an efficient manner. His services in the cause of the publication of Islamic literature deserve appreciation and gratefulness.

It will be noticed that in Chapter 1 (" Illustrative Introduction ") I have dealt with the political theories of certain non-Muslim writers such as Confucius, Mencius and Kauṭilya along with those of Ibn Khaldūn in an epitomised form. These four are already well known to students of Oriental history and political thought, so, acting according to the precept of argument from the known to the unknown, I have prefaced a short description of their political ideas to the theories of those whose political thought is less familiar to us.

Hyderabad-Deccan,
September 1, 1942.

H. K. S.

CONTENTS

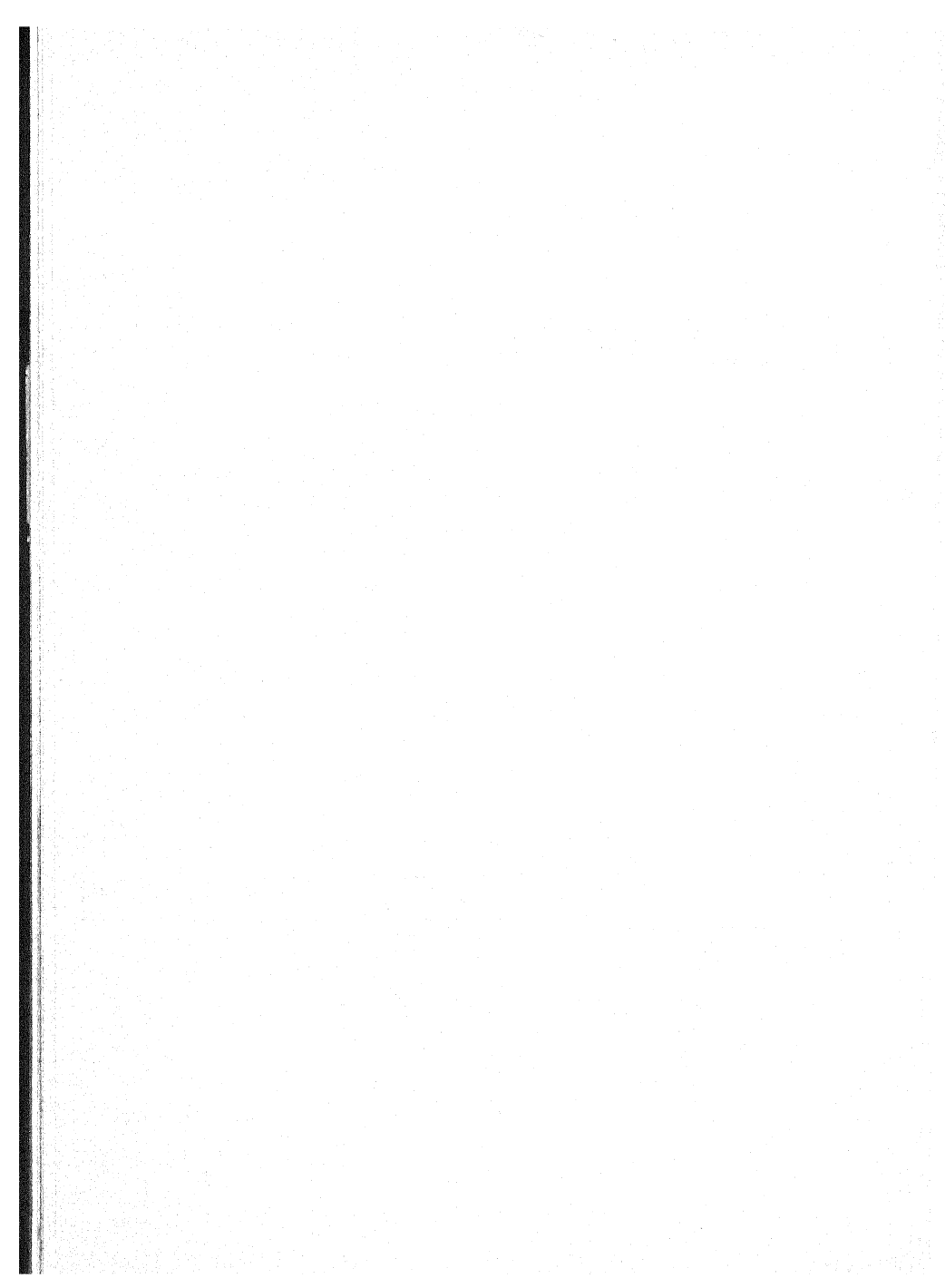
1. ILLUSTRATIVE INTRODUCTION	1
Confucius, B.C. 550-478—Mencius, B.C. 372-287—Kaṭṭilya, fl., B.C. 321-300—Ibn Khaldūn, 1322-1406.	
2. THE QUR'ĀNIC STATE (610-632 A.C.)	23
I. Introduction.	
II. The Antecedents—Persia—The Eastern Roman Empire—Arabian States.	
III. The Essence of the Qur'ānic State—The First Pledges—Centre shifted to Medīnah—Qur'ānic Argument—God the Ruler—The Principle of Order—Peace and Obedience—Law and Justice—Social Reform—Counsel—Laws of War—Toleration—Internationalism.	
3. IBN ABĪ'R-RABĪ' (9th Century A.C.)	66
I. Introduction—The background—Administration—When did Ibn Abī'r-Rabī' write?	
II. The Subject-matter—Social Nature of Man and its Consequences—Scheme of Human Knowledge—Sovereignty—Justice—Revolutions—Slavery—General Conclusions.	
4. FĀRĀBĪ (870-950)	96
Fārābī's Education—Political Conditions—Saifu'd-Dowlaḥ's Court—Administration—Fārābī's Versatility—His Position in the World of Learning—His Political Works—Human Intellect and Powers—Natural and Artificial barriers to Human Unity—Theory of Mutual Renunciation of Rights—Sovereignty—Internal Organization of the State—Communism and Individualism—Varieties of States—Empires; Colonies—The Ideal Head of the State—Conclusion.	
5. THE TENTH AND ELEVENTH CENTURIES	132
A. MĀWARDĪ (974-1058)	
Introduction—Political Machinery—Māwardī's Works—The Imāmat—Ministry—Justice—Central Government—Māwardī's Method.	

viii *Muslim Political Thought and Administration*

B.	AMIR KAIKĀ'ŪS (1020-1082)			
	Contents of the <i>Qābūs Nāmah</i> —Its Method.			
C.	NIZĀMU'L-MULK ṬŪSĪ (1017-1091)			
	Early Life—Historical Perspective—His Method—Comparison with European Political Scientists—His Political Ideas — Kingship — State Officials — Ambassadors — An estimate of Nizāmū'l-Mulk—Comparisons.			
6.	GHAZZĀLĪ (1058-1111)	...	...	189
	Ṭūs—Ghazzālī's Life—Political Background—Political Machinery of the Saljuqīs—Ghazzālī's Works on Politics—Contemporary thought in Europe—Perception <i>versus</i> Experience—Mundane and Celestial—Division of Sciences—Development of the State—Idea—State, Law, Constitution and Religion—Biological Similes—Ghazzālī's Method—Justice—Duties and Functions of the Executive—The Ruler's Daily Routine—Heads of Revenue—Simplicity of the Ideal Sovereign—Slavery—Secret Service—Ghazzālī and Democracy—Counsel—Provincial Administration—Ministry—Conclusion.			
7.	MAḤMŪD GĀWĀṆ (1411-1481)	...	...	232
	Early Life—The Bahmanī Kingdom—Parties at Bīdar—Conduct as a Party Politician—His Political Thought—His Administrative Principles—Fate of his Reforms.			
8.	RECAPITULATION	...	...	254
	Introduction.			
	I. Theory of the State.			
	II. Origin of the State.			
	III. Sovereignty and the Sovereign.			
	IV. Form of the State.			
	V. Internationalism and Diplomacy.			
INDEX	...	...	...	275

SYSTEM OF TRANSCRIPTION OF ORIENTAL WORDS

'	ع	r	ر
ā	'ا	s	ث
au	أو	ṣ	ص
ch	چ	<u>th</u>	ذ
d	د	sh	ش
ḍ	ḍ	t	ت
ḍ	ض	ṭ	ط
<u>gh</u>	غ	ṭ	ط
h	ح	ū	او
ī	ای	z	ز
<u>kh</u>	خ	ẓ	ظ
ṇ	نون غنة	zh	ژ
q	ق		



Chapter 1

ILLUSTRATIVE INTRODUCTION

IT is greatly to be regretted that while an average student of Political Science knows all about the theories of Plato and Aristotle, Aquinas and Dante, Bodin and Hobbes, Rousseau and Green, he is generally ignorant of the great political thinkers of the East, thinkers who not merely propounded theories for the school room or the College hall but who actually advised monarchs about the best way of carrying on the government of their countries. It is noticeable that modern histories of various sciences ignore to a very large extent their progress in the East during the ages, and almost invariably begin the story with Greece and Rome, passing, after a slight reference to Arabian thought on the subject, to the Medieval period of European history. A student with an ordinary sense of historical perspective and vision is perplexed at this quaint phenomenon and wishes to know whether the millenia which elapsed between the rise of the various cultures of the East and the commencement

2 *Muslim Political Thought and Administration*

of classical Greek history, and the centuries between the fall of Rome and the renaissance of Europe, were really so utterly blank. China, India, Babylonia, Assyria, Egypt, such is the wonderful array of some of the countries which had developed their own civilizations long before the advent of Greece on the stage of human history. Moreover the great rise of learning which was the predominant factor of the era after the Arabian Prophet's demise, and which was the real cause of the Rebirth of Sciences, has to be reckoned with. It is evident that humanity could not have been so barren during all these centuries as to be devoid of all political thought, and before we pass on to Islamic political thought it is better to estimate in a small compass the correlation of the ideas of certain Oriental political thinkers picked up almost at random.

Here it will not be out of place to say a word about the general trend of the history of Eastern nations as compared with the West. When we read a book on the constitutional history of a Western country, we are struck by great, almost interminable, struggles between the rulers and the ruled. Take the case of the more familiar history of England. It strikes an impartial observer that this history is full of rebellions and revolts, of Magna Cartas and Grand Remonstrances, of

Petitioners and Abhorrrers, and one is surprised at the utter lack of confidence evinced both by the rulers and their subjects, which has finally developed into that curious institution called His Majesty's Opposition. No such systematic antithesis existed between the rulers and the ruled in Eastern countries in the heyday of their glory. The sovereign there was the embodiment of the State, the Shadow of God, the father and patron of his subjects, the protector of their rights. These are not mere idle words, or even to-day, in the only Asiatic country which can vie in power and progress with any nation of the West, Japan, the sovereign is regarded not only as the earthly embodiment of the whole nation but as a very god on earth, an entity to be revered and worshipped. Potentates, instead of haggling with the representatives of their subjects over 'grants' and 'redress of grievances' have always been jealous to do good to their fellow-countrymen. Who can ever forget how during the last floods of the Mūsī, His Highness the late Nizam of Hyderabad threw open the gates of his palaces for the relief of the poor, and who is not aware of the tremendous strides which the Dominions of His Exalted Highness the Nizam have taken during the present reign. The modern Eastern potentates

4 *Muslim Political Thought and Administration*

are only treading in the footsteps of their ancestors in title and are giving additional proof, if it be needed, of the basic difference between the monarchy of the East and the monarchy of the West. Absolutism is sometimes regarded as an Oriental institution *par excellence*, but Oriental absolutism seldom takes sides against the people of the land and is nearly always benevolent—benevolent of a type hardly known to the nations of the West.

It was necessary to dilate, however briefly, on this peculiarity of Eastern politics, for otherwise it would have been difficult to understand the theses of Oriental political philosophers. While political thinkers of the West content themselves with logical and psychological factors in the body-politic and deduce conclusions from these factors, Eastern political philosophers are more practical in their method, and their treatises are mostly booklets on the art of government, though some of them actually indulge in theorising after the manner of the Europeans. In reading them one is struck by the great respect and veneration shown to them by the potentates as well as by the courage with which they, so to speak, give lessons in the art of government to those who had the reins of power in their hands.

Confucius (circa 550-478 B.C.).—Confucius is

the first writer with whom we have to deal. Pre-eminent in the whole range of political thinkers on account of the great hold his thought still exercises over his people after the lapse of more than two thousand years, is Ku'ng Fū-Tzē, whose name was later Latinised as Confucius. He was born about 550 B.C. when China was passing through a period of interregnum, and feudal lords, with almost regal rights and privileges, were making themselves independent masters of their little bits of territory owing to the want of any proper controlling authority. He himself was a native of one of these semi-independent tracts, the State of Lū, which was situated towards the modern peninsula of Shantung. At the commencement of his career he kept entirely aloof from politics and became deeply absorbed in the history of his country, trying to determine the causes of anarchy which prevailed in it. He was at last appointed magistrate in the district of Chung Tū, eventually becoming minister of justice, and had therefore ample opportunities for putting his ideas into practice. His whole theory of government was based on a strict prescribed ceremonial and routine, and principally consisted of interference in the everyday life of the individual; for it was only thus that, he thought, he could redress the great wrong done to the land

6 *Muslim Political Thought and Administration*

by the licentious acts of individuals. He maintained that society was made up of five elements of at least two interrelated factors each, *i.e.*, Ruler and Ruled, Husband and Wife, Father and Son, Elder Brother and Younger Brother, and Mutual Friends. It has been so ordained by Providence that the first factor in the first four groups rules the second factor, which should submit to the dictates of the first, and while the first factor should be righteous and benevolent, the conduct of the second should be marked by sincerity and truthfulness. So far as friends are concerned, says Confucius, they should contrive at the mutual promotion of virtue. Such are the distinguishing marks of a well-ordered society, and whenever these principles are violated by passion on either side the society immediately tends to be anarchical.

We notice that among the five groups enumerated by the sage, the foremost is that of the ruler and the subject, and Confucius says that while the rulers should be righteous and just, the subjects should submit to his orders with sincerity. Filial love is to him the key-note of all politics, and the people should obey the government in the same way as the son obeys the dictates of his wise parents. But an oppressive government he could never tolerate, and there is

the story of a woman of Ch'i whom he saw weeping at a tomb; he sent one of his disciples to enquire the cause of his sorrow, and he was told that her husband as well as her father-in-law had been killed by a tiger on that very spot. When asked why, in that case, she remained there, she said she would not go because at least that place was free from oppressive government. Confucius therefore turned to his disciples and remarked that evidently oppressive government was more to be feared than a beast of prey.

Confucius died in 478 B.C. with his mission partly successful. The imperial state of Ch'ou as well as the feudal system subsisted for another two centuries when both were swept away by the first historical dynasty of China, the dynasty of Ts'in. It was his grief that no model ruler could be found who could act according to his precepts. He was, however, a great believer in his own ideas as well in the preponderating goodness of human nature, and he has left an indelible mark on the innermost recesses of Chinese family life and politics, which has subsisted to our own day. It is perhaps only when mere names replaced realities and the interrelationship between the government and the people disappeared, that China re-entered an era of interregnum from which Confucius wished to extricate her so much.

8 *Muslim Political Thought and Administration*

Mencius (372-287 B.C.).—We cannot, however, fully understand the mission of Confucius till we have studied teachings of one of his followers, namely Mong Tzē or Mencius. Interregnum was still the order of the day in China which was rent asunder by the internecine feuds of the Seven Monarchies into which the Empire had been split up. Mencius grieved that while on the one hand the royal ordinances were systematically violated, on the other the people were labouring under continuous oppression from above. He was utterly hopeless about the future of Ch'ou and his idea was to go about from State to State till he could find a ruler who could listen to his counsel.

It was under such unsettled conditions that he propounded his theory of government. He says that kingship is no doubt a divine institution, but the question remains as to who is the favoured of the Almighty. Mencius answers this quite logically that only he is fit to ascend the throne and remain there whom God has made capable of shouldering this burden, that is to say one who is a man of character and is fit to carry on the government properly. No doubt government is from God, but governors must be discovered by the people. He goes so far as to say that the monarch whose rule is injurious and who is deaf

to all remonstrances is unfit to hold the reins of government and should be set aside by the members of his own household, by a worthy minister, or else by a 'minister of heaven,' by which he means a person of character who can fulfil the responsibilities of the State better. A good king, says Mencius, must be benevolent and righteous for benevolence and righteousness have no enemies, and no purely selfish man should remain a sovereign, one who could be happy while others were miserable.

Mencius's words were prophetic, and Imperial Ch'ou continued its path of decadence till a very short time afterwards it was finally annexed by Ts'in in 222 B.C. His theory of the divinity of kingship coupled with the right of the people to select their ruler is perhaps unique in the annals of political philosophy. He was, like Confucius, an idealist, and was looking for a prince after his own heart, but he could not discover him. The first period of the history of China closes about this time, and with the supremacy of Ts'in begins a new epoch which lasted right up to our own day, when the last Emperor was dethroned and the Republic proclaimed in 1911.

Kauṭilya.—We now traverse the road from the Far East to the Middle East, from China to India. The last years of the fourth century B.C. were a

10 *Muslim Political Thought and Administration*

period of great turmoil in the politics of the Middle East, for Alexander of Macedon was over-running practically all the world known to him and subduing not only Greece and Egypt but Asia Minor, Persia, Afghanistan and the Punjab. It was in India that he first met an opposition of a considerable extent, and not only had he to retrace his steps back from the banks of the Sutlej, but those whom he had left behind were finally forced to evacuate the Punjab by the Mauryā Emperor, Chandragupta. We have to deal with the prime minister of this Indian potentate, who is variously named Chāṇikya, Kauṭilya and Vishṇugupta. We know nothing about the date of his birth or of his death, but internal evidence goes to prove that he must have compiled his remarkable work, the Arthasāstra, some time between 321 and 300 B.C.

The author says at the outset that the compilation 'is made as a compendium of almost all the Arthasāstras, which, in view of acquisition and maintenance of the earth, have been composed by ancient teachers.' In fact it contains both a *résumé* and a critique of the ancient Indian authors of political philosophy and a fairly correct account of the administration of the vast Mauryā Empire. The author shows his intensely practical nature, and instead of beating about the

bush, theorising about the outward phenomenon of the State, goes immediately into the inner working of its machinery. It is remarkable how this old author and statesman forestalls the state of nature depicted by the English philosopher, Thomas Hobbes, by nearly two thousand years, and says that the condition of affairs before the formation of the State was that of Matsya Nyāya or the Logic of the Fish, that is to say, just as in the wide ocean large fishes feed on small ones, so in the epoch of the pre-State everyone was on the look-out to prey upon the weak and the helpless and thus to increase his own authority and prosperity. There is, however, no express contract either as between the sovereign and the others, or among the individuals themselves, but Kauṭilya has no doubt that a condition of tacit contract existed as between the king and his subjects. It would be proper here to quote Kauṭilya's own words in this connection :

People suffering from anarchy, as illustrated by the proverbial tendency of a large fish to swallow a small one, first elected Manu the Vaivasvata to be their king, and allotted one-sixth of the grain grown and one-tenth of the merchandise as sovereign dues. Fed by this payment, kings took upon themselves the responsibility of maintaining the safety

12 Muslim Political Thought and Administration

and security of their subjects and of being answerable for the sins of their subjects when the principle of levying just punishments and taxes had been violated.

According to Kauṭilya kings should avoid injuring women, be truthful, and shun all haughtiness and evil ways. This can only be the outcome of a grounding in the arts and sciences useful to their responsible position, so that in order to become good kings in future life, princes of the blood should be given a thorough intellectual training. Kings should not covet the lands, riches, sons and wives of the slain, nor should they annex the territories of those whom they have subdued in war, but should set the son of the slain prince on the throne. He goes on to mention the three *shaktīs*, or powers of the king, which are described by earlier authors, viz., *Mantra shaktī*, or the power of taking counsel, *Prabhū shaktī* or the majesty of the royal person, and *Utsāha shaktī* or energy, and says that these *shaktīs* are represented by Knowledge, Army and Treasury, and the personal courage of the ruler. Kauṭilya quotes the ancient achāryas who held that the *Utsāha shaktī* was more important to the king than his *Prabhū shaktī* and thus forestalls Walter Bagehot's famous theory of the dignified and efficient elements of government by thousands of years.

Kauṭilya is less a political theorist than a practical counsellor in the art of government, and it is not a mere coincidence that he has been compared by some, chiefly by the Italian Botazzi, to Machiavelli. But it is noticeable that he is far less Machiavellian and more straightforward than the Florentine, and dilates on the art of government in fairly comprehensive terms. It would be beyond our scope to discuss his principles of diplomacy, but in order to provide a correct perspective for his argument it would not be out of place to mention some of the elements of his Statecraft. He says that dominion may be acquired in three ways, *viz.*, a country may be newly conquered, recovered from a usurper, or inherited. When a king subdues another he should put the virtues of the overpowered monarch entirely in the shade, should favour the learned, the charitable and the brave, and should relieve the helpless from their unfortunate plight. Moreover, in order to conciliate the native population, the conquering potentate should respect the established customs of the land as much as possible. No doubt the king may have to follow some unscrupulous means in order to bring the people over to his side; for instance, says Kauṭilya, a conqueror should forthwith proclaim his own association with the gods of the country and thus

12 Muslim Political Thought and Administration

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keep the subdued people from turning away. But we find this method applied to only a few cases, and generally Kauṭilya is more straightforward than would at first sight appear.

Before passing on to our next author mention should be made to Kauṭilya's theory of punishment. He says that one who inflicts too severe a punishment becomes oppressive, while one whose decrees are too mild is easily overpowered, and only he is respected by all whose judgment is according to the crime committed. Punishment is a sure guarantee of the social order, for without it the State would lapse into the condition of *matsya nyāya* and the strong begin to overpower the weak. All this shows that Kauṭilya wishes the punishment to 'fit the crime' in order to preserve the equilibrium of the State, and the importance of this principle becomes the more apparent when we perceive that it was not till very late in history that it was finally accepted in Europe after Montesquieu had traced the line of reform in the matter of trial and punishment in his *Esprit des Lois* and Beccaria had finally put forth the more human point of view in his book, *Dei Delitti e delle Pene* about the middle of the last century. Kauṭilya's work remains the first complete description of the constitutional, political and legal conditions of a vast Empire.

Ibn Khaldūn (1322-1406 A.C.).—We can now pass on in our survey to lands which are by reason of their geographical position in close relation with the western countries of Europe, namely North Africa and Southern Spain. In the middle of the fourteenth century A.C. Spain was in a bad way, for the beneficent culture of the Muslims, which had made Spain what it was, was being eradicated by the conquering arm of the Christians. It was yet a hundred years before the Muslims were either expelled from the country or forced to forsake the religion of their ancestors at the point of the sword of Fernando the Catholic and his consort Isabella of Castille, when there arose from the town of Tunis a man of remarkable knowledge and industry as well of immense historical and political ability, perhaps the first scientific historian of the modern world, one who has left an indelible mark on the science of history, Ibn Khaldūn.

Ibn Khaldūn was born at Tunis in 1322 and lived on to the hoary age of 84, dying at Cairo in 1406. Northern Africa was then split up into a number of petty dynasties, while three-fourths of Spain had fallen under the supremacy of Christian States. We see Ibn Khaldūn journeying from one African capital to another, now at Fez and Granada, then at Tlemcen and Tunis ; invited by the Christ-

ian Pedro, surnamed the Cruel, King of Castille, to take possession of his ancestral estate at Seville ; taking part along with the ruler of Egypt in a Syrian campaign against Timur ; and finally serving as a judge at Cairo. Thus he lived and wrote at the time of the general dissolution of the Arab States which had to face the onslaught of the Christians from the north-west and the Mughals from the north-east. The Muslim east was in a turmoil and the idea of racial unity was at loggerheads with the old bond of religious unity. Ibn Khaldūn noticed these tendencies, and coupling these with his native thoroughness and erudition, produced the remarkable book called *The History of the Arabs, Berbers and other Neighbouring Nations*.

Ibn Khaldūn laid great stress on the comparative method of politics, and it was only natural that with this view-point he should consider the science of history to be not only allied to political philosophy but political philosophy to be a part of history, so much so that he prefaced to his great work a detailed dissertation on the rise and fall of States which forms his main contribution to political thought.

At the outset of this *Prolegomena* he describes the importance of the science of history and says that it is this science whereby we get to know

the ways of the ancients, the moral conditions of ages gone by, the teachings of Divine Messengers and the politics and diplomacy of States which have passed away, and with the help of the facts thus collected we can choose the path best suited to us. But in order to be useful to posterity history should deal with the social and political development of a people, and not merely with the actions of a few individuals. Man is distinguished from other animals by his power of reflection, his tendency towards association and the need of a controlling authority, but these very facts are at the bottom of the differences between various groups of human beings, and these are vastly intensified by the effect of climate and geographical position of different countries. We must here notice that it was not till Bodin reinitiated and Montesquieu developed this theory of the physical background of politics that Europe first began to think of these problems, finally leading to the extravagant generalisations of certain modern geographers who say that everything, from human physiognomy and the shape of human hair down to the social, political and religious conditions of different human groups, depends to a large extent on the configuration of the soil and the climatic conditions of the locality.

Ibn Khaldūn's theory of the effects of climatic

conditions on the social structure of human beings is interspersed with illustrations from the animal world as well as the history of various human races. He says that it is obvious that those living near the Equator must be exposed to excessive heat and thus be handicapped in making much progress. On the contrary it is those nations which live in temperate regions, such as Arabs, Romans, Persians and Greeks, who have mostly contributed to the history of civilisation and culture. In the same way nomadic tribes depend on their food on fresh milk and fresh meat and are therefore much more powerful and hardy than others both physically and spiritually; for, asks Ibn Khaldūn, are not the gazelle, the wild cow and the wild ass for healthier and stronger than their tamer kin?

Ibn Khaldūn maintains that the State has its foundations on one of two great moral principles, the sense of oneness or Group Mind and religion. If we were to analyse the basis of the foundation of nations and try to discover some uniformity in this analysis we would come to the conclusion that it is this sense of unity and the resolve to work together which goes a long way towards making strong and free nations; and in our own day it is this phenomenon which can explain the successful formation of such heterogeneous nations as

Switzerland, Belgium, Canada and the United States of America. Ibn Khaldūn says that the Group Mind may be traced back to tribal consanguinity. With the extension of tribal territory and the genesis of the State it was found that, instead of being only one aggregate of common feeling the group consisted of a number of such aggregates. These Group Minds were bound to come into conflict, and the State really came into being on the final victory of one element over all others, so that its special power of co-action subdued all other powers and thus became sovereign in relation to all other powers within its purview.

The last point to be touched in this connection is Ibn Khaldūn's analysis of the history of mankind and of the successive stages in the development of the State. He says that the natural life of an empire is limited to a century and a quarter or nearly three human generations. The Group Idea begins in nomadic peoples when men lead healthy, open air lives, respect women and keep their neighbours in awe by their valour and hardihood till they overpower their enemies and begin to rule as an imperial nation. Where formerly the tribe led a strenuous life, now it begins to lead a life of opulence, and all real authority begins to be centred in a leader while the populace becomes lazy and indolent. Communal spirit now

disappears and no feeling but that of submission to the commands of the ruler is either known or tolerated. People become more and more effete and effeminate till the ruler is obliged to surround himself with mercenaries, slaves and freedmen in order to save the State from foreign domination. The end soon comes, and the State which was once a source of terror to its neighbours finally falls a prey to one of them.

Looking back upon the history of nations we find that the analysis is not without a good deal of truth. This history may be divided into a number of distinct periods, namely the foundation of the State with all the might of the component population, the leadership of a chief or king, followed by absolutism in government. Autocracy has a curious result; as all the responsibility of government rests on the shoulders of a single person, the subjects either begin to lead a life of carelessness and ease or else begin to agitate for popular rights. In the former case the prediction of Ibn Khaldūn generally comes true and the State dies a natural death, while in the case of the second alternative and the success of the popular experiment a new State in effect takes the place of the first and the cycle begins to work over again.

We have traced to some extent the political

principles of four remarkable personalities of the East, namely Confucius, Mencius, Kauṭilya and Ibn Khaldūn. It will be easily gathered what an important place they hold not only in Oriental political thought but in political thought in general. Confucius, who flourished long before the birth of Plato, may be said to be the father of all political philosophy, and though he could not stem the baneful tide of degeneration and disintegration in imperial Ch'ou, his principles were accepted and adopted by his countrymen to a large extent, with the remarkable result that China is to-day the only State which has lived an independent life from times almost immemorial in spite of tremendous odds. Kauṭilya was a contemporary of Aristotle, but in contrast to the western sage, he actually shouldered the burden of the empire to which he belonged. The great difference between the method of Aristotle and that of Kauṭilya is to be seen in the fact that while Aristotle harped on an out-of-date tune and dealt with the City State and its constitution when it had already passed away from reality to past history, Kauṭilya describes an organisation still with a throbbing pulse. When Aristotle talks of Athenian democracy and Spartan aristocracy he knows that these entities have really been swept away by the might of the Macedonian

22 *Muslim Political Thought and Administration*

arms; on the other hand Kauṭilya bases his principles on what he actually saw and experienced, and he was perhaps himself responsible for the great organisation which is so amply described in his book. Coming to Ibn Khaldūn we see the erudite statesman and political philosopher again merged into one, and it was perhaps due to this happy aggregation of his natural capacities that he has created a special *niche* for himself in the world of historical philosophy. It is no wonder that men of such world-wide experience and remarkable calibre should have forestalled later European authors in their breadth of vision, inventive mind and power of analysis.

Chapter 2

THE QUR'ĀNIC STATE (610-632)

I. INTRODUCTION

WHILE studying the exceedingly varied subject connected with political thought among the Muslims one is struck by the simple truths from which flowed the great river of Politics which was moulded into myriad shapes from year to year, century to century, over hill and dale, mountain and plain, changing its outward form with the geographical and temporary configuration of the land, still remaining in essentials the same as it was before. And the more one ponders over the subject the more does one feel that before proceeding with a discussion of Muslim authors one must first analyse the essence of the origin of all Islamic thought as depicted in the Qur'ān. The magnitude of the task is immense for a number of reasons. Firstly with a society like that of the Arabs of old and a book like the Qur'ān, it is very difficult to divorce political

concepts from others which went to make Arabia for a time the foremost country in the world. For after all, these nice distinctions between 'political' and 'non-political' factors are very modern and were quite unknown to those who lived centuries ago. Moreover it must not be forgotten that although organisation and discipline, which are the only way of attaining whatever liberty is possible, and which in ordinary parlance are called Politics, go a long way towards the betterment of a society, still if this is removed from other factors in the life of a people, it is not enough to cover the background, and the picture produced thereby would be unreal and mutilated. Anyhow, so far as the political aspect of the Qur'ān is concerned, the task has never, to my knowledge, been attempted before.

II. THE ANTECEDENTS

Without trying to suggest any connection between the Qur'ānic State and the political organisation of the States bordering on the peninsula of Arabia at the time of the apostolic mission of Muḥammad, it will simplify the understanding of the background if we were to know something about them as well as about the political condition of the Arabs some time towards

the sixth century of the Christian era. Arabia was then bordered on the north by two mighty empires, Persia and *Nova Roma* or Byzantium. Persia had deeply affected the civilisation of Western and Central Asia, while the Empire of Byzantium or, as it is sometimes called, the Eastern Roman Empire, was the direct descendant of Ancient Greece and Rome. It will be interesting to know something about the organisation of these empires and of that of Arabia, if only that we may grasp the similarities and dissimilarities which would not otherwise be easily discerned.

Īrān.—Īrān had a connected history dating back to hundreds of years before the dawn of the known history of Greece and Rome, and from the very beginning it had given an example of great unity and centralisation which seems so difficult of accomplishment in those far off days. Here it will be sufficient to deal only with the conditions of the country towards the end of the sixth century of the Christian era, say about the time of *Khusrū Anūshīrwān*.¹ As was the case with many primitive peoples, the Īrānians were divided among four absolutely distinct castes, the upper three being definitely separated from the fourth and the lowest caste. The three highest castes consisted of priests and judges recruited exclusively

¹ 531-579 A.C.

from the tribe of the Māgī and were therefore called *Māgīpets* or *Mōbeds*, the Warriors and Officials, while the fourth were composed of Craftsmen and Farmers. The outward symbol of political unity and organisation was the *Shāhin-shāh*, so called because he was the overlord not only of the provincial governors but also of such vassal princes as ruled the distant parts of the empire, such as Ḥirā in Arabia. Among the highest aristocracy were the *Marzbāns* or the Wardens of the Marches, and the *Pahlavīs* who claimed the blue blood of the Arsacides and held the honorific offices of *Īrān-spāh-pad* or the Generalissimo, and the *Spāh-pad* of the Commander of the Horse, with large fiefs the usufruct of which went directly into their pockets without the attachment of any definite duty.¹ These formed the aristocracy of birth. The aristocracy of office was no less exacting. The so-called *people* consisted of free townsmen and serfs bound to the soil who had to serve on the fields or in the army without pay or reward. These were entirely isolated and could never hope to rank even as *dihqāns* or townsmen, who enjoyed the use of their fiefs and from whom they were separated by impassable barriers. Above the headmen

¹ This perhaps corresponds to the system of the *Maṅṣabdārs* of the later Mughal Empire and of modern Hyderabad.

came the four great Padgōsphāns or Viceroys, who were probably in charge of the four divisions of the empire corresponding to the four cardinal points. Above all this hierarchy was the Imperial Cabinet consisting, among others, of the Hazārpēt or Grand Wazir, the Mōbidān-mōbed or the Chief Priest, Hārbād or the Guardian of the Sacred Fire, Dabīrpād or the Chief Secretary and the Spāh-pād or Commander-in-Chief.

The Shāhinshāh formed the pivot of the administration. He was at once the embodiment of the People, the centre of the Realm and the source from which all honour flowed. It was only on very rare occasions that he showed himself in public, and whenever he did so, it was with great pomp and ceremony. On these occasions he was magnificently dressed, a heavy crown suspended above his head from the roof by a golden chain, sitting on a golden throne, the Imperial Princes in charge of the great embroidered curtain which hid him from view till the time when those present had the privilege of seeing him.

In early societies conscious legislation is rare, and Īrān was no exception. What little law-making was done had to be passed by the College of Mōbeds, the repositories of the Mazdean religion, who were recruited from the ancient tribe of the Māgī. To them also belonged the duty—perhaps

the privilege—of imparting education, and it was they who fined those who transgressed the Law. Crimes of apostasy and treason were punished with death, and frequent recourse was had to blinding, crucifixion, stoning and starvation. After the rise of Christianity the votaries of the Cross were regarded as being specially marked for State vengeance as they were more and more closely associated with the neighbouring and hostile State of Byzantium.

The taxes levied in Īrān before the advent of Islam had their counterpart in the early Caliphate. The principal tax was the land tax called *Khrāg*, so much per measure of land, assessed on each canton according to the harvest, while the amount to be levied was divided equally among the population of the canton. This tax was from one-sixth to one-third of the gross produce. The other important tax was the *gezūt* (Ar. *Jizieh*), which was a fixed annual tax levied on the people in such a way that the highest classes paid most, and its burden fell on those who did not or could not hold landed property such as the Jews and the Christians, and those of the rest of the population between twenty and twenty-five years of age. Apart from these two main taxes it was customary to offer sums of money to the sovereign especially on the occasion of the two equinoctical

festivals.

It is remarkable that just before the birth of the Apostle of Islam in 570 A.C. the thrones of the neighbouring empires were occupied by men who have in their own ways made a mark in the history of the world, i.e., Khusrū Anūshīrwān of Īrān and Justinian¹ of Byzantium.

The Eastern Roman Empire.—Justinian had been dead five years after a reign of thirty-eight years at the time of the birth of Muḥammad, and during the first forty years of the latter's life the throne of Constantinople was occupied successively by Justin II,² Tiberius II,³ Maurice⁴ and Phocas,⁵ while Heraclius reigned through the Medīnā period of his life.⁶

It is surprising that all that was truly Roman had been swept away by the very class which chose to call itself Roman. Instead of the administration being in the hands of the 'People' or their Senate it was now composed of one solitary order dependent on the will of the Emperor. The People were themselves divided into a number of sub-castes namely, (1) the Curule caste, consisting of landed proprietors, who could neither take to the army nor enter into any kind

¹ 528-565.

² 565-578.

³ 578-582.

⁴ 582-602.

⁵ 602-610.

⁶ 610-641.

⁷ 641-668.

⁸ 668-685.

⁹ 685-711.

¹⁰ 711-755.

of trade ; (2) the Tributary caste, which like its prototype in Īrān, consisted of those freemen who were not landed proprietors and who paid the capitation tax, and members of various gilds the membership of which descended from father to son ; and (3) the Military caste. But all these classes fell a prey to the terrible policy of taxation which proved to be the bane of the empire. As a writer on the subject says, "the cultivators of the soil were nothing but the instruments for feeding and clothing the Imperial court and the army."¹ Not content with levying legal taxes, the Emperor often had recourse to presents which, at first voluntary, were later made regular sources of revenue.

The actual administration had become the household affair of the Emperor, and although the Senate had nominally suffered to exist for some time and was not finally suppressed till the reign of Justinian, still even before his time it had become an entirely effete and worthless body. At last Justinian, true to his barbarian origin, finally effaced all traces of the ancient political system, and so organised the government that it became possible to mulct everything for the ornamentation of the court. It is extraordinary what a large number of black deeds were

¹ Julian, *Orabb.*, II, 92, quoted in Finaly, *History of Greece*. I, 281.

committed by this man who is so well known as the codifier of the ancient law of Rome, and it is a historical fact that never in the annals of ancient Europe were the people more miserable than in the days of this lawgiver. 'Freemen were sold, and in order to escape taxation, vineyards were rooted out and buildings were destroyed.'¹ It was the recurrent practice to confiscate the property of the wealthiest citizens in insolvent districts until they were utterly ruined. The great Justinian did not stop at that; in his time there was an open sale of offices, and orders were issued that payments were to be made either to the Emperor himself or to his wife the Empress Theodora.

So far as toleration was concerned, there was none. Before the adoption of Christianity it was the Christians who were persecuted, but after Christianity had become the faith of the Emperor, no stone was left unturned to uproot classical learning, the Jewish faith, and all that had a tinge of heresy against the personal religion of the Emperor. In 529 A.C. Justinian finally closed the schools of rhetoric and philosophy and confiscated all the property endowed for their support, shutting for ever the doors of the Academy of Plato, the Lyceum of Aristotle and the Stoa of

¹ Finlay, I, 3 : 4.

Zeno. Theodosius, surnamed the Great, had already abolished the Olympian games,¹ which had endured for a millennium, and by his time 'thought was so much enslaved at Athens that no opinions were allowed to taught except such as were allowed by licence on behalf of the Imperial authorities.' As an instance of the religious persecution in the Eastern Empire mention might be made of the case of the Patrician Phocas who poisoned himself in order to escape being converted to Christianity by force. A few years afterwards another Phocas, the Emperor, ordered all the Jews of the empire to be baptised, while his successor Heraclius, although he ordered Phocas's hands and feet to be cut off before his final decapitation, was no friend of the Jews, for he banished them from Jerusalem and ordered them not to come within three thousand feet of the Holy City. The morals of the empire were so decadent that the new Emperor's marriage with his own niece was celebrated by no less a person than the patriarch of Constantinople himself.

Such was the condition of Īrān and Eastern Rome about the third quarter of the sixth century, and a great historian of the Middle East, himself an outstanding upholder of the Greek tradition, summarises the state of affairs thus: "There is

¹ Finlay, I, 3 : 11.

perhaps no period of history in which society was so much in a state of demoralisation nor in which all the nations known to the Greeks and the Romans were so utterly destitute of energy and virtue as during the period which elapsed between the death of Justinian and the birth of Mahomet.”¹ The *nemesis* was bound to come, and “events which no human sagacity could foresee, against which no human wisdom could contend, and which the philosopher can only explain by attributing them to the dispensation of the Providence who exhibits in the history of the world the education of the whole human species, at last put an end to the existence of Roman domination in the East.”²

Arabian States.—We now turn to the land of Arabia which was to serve as the cradle of the Islamic faith, and note its political condition at the time of the birth and ministry of the Apostle of Islam. The Arabs divided themselves into three main divisions: (1) the ‘Arabu’l-Bā’idah or the Hamitic colonies of the North; (2) the ‘Arabu’l-‘Āribah or the Semitic descendants of Qaḥṭān or Yaḡṭān, who very early superimposed themselves on the ‘Arabu’l-Bā’idah; and (3) the ‘Arabu’l-Musta’rabah, the descendants of Abraham, who originally came from the north, settling down

¹ Finlay, I, 4 : 2.

² *Ibid.*, 4 : 1.

among the former. The 'Arabu'l-Bā'idah had long ceased to exist as a separate entity, and the peninsula had come to be divided among the other two sections of the population. The homeland of the Qaḥṭānīs was Yemen in the South, while, as has been noted above, the Abrahamites migrated from the North. The Qaḥṭānīs migrated northwards, occupying the Ḥijaz and Yemāmah along with Yeṣrib, and moving further north, settled in Syria, founding the kingdom of Ghassān near Damascus about the beginning of the Christian era. This kingdom was soon dominated by the Eastern Roman Empire, its ruler becoming Christian, and persisted till the time of the Caliph 'Umar.¹ Another branch of the Qaḥṭānīs went north-east settling near the ancient Babylon on the banks of the Euphrates, founding the Kingdom of Ḥīrah about 195 A.C. Like the sister State of Ghassān this kingdom also could not remain independent for long, soon coming under the influence and suzerainty of Īrān, and we actually read of a king of Ḥīrah, Munthir by name,² who received the high title of Mihisht or Greatest from the Shahinshāh. About forty years before the birth of Muḥammad, Abū Qābūs Nu'mān of Ḥīrah tried to become independent but failed, and at last the kingdom was absorbed in the Īrānian Empire by Khusrū II

¹ 636 A.C.² About 418 : 462.

in 610.¹

It will thus be seen that these two monarchies of Ghassān and Ḥīrah were too insignificant and subservient to make a mark on the administrative history of the country. Eastern Central Arabia fared no better, for its Yemenites also passed under Īrānian suzerainty, though, being distant from the centre of the culture of Īrān, they could exercise greater autonomy. The Far South, the homeland of the Qaḥṭānīs, was in the throes of a war of independence against its neighbours, the Negus of Abyssinia, a quarrel which arose out of the religious animosity of the Christian Abyssinians and the Jewish king of the Yemen, Yūsuf thū Nawās about 529. Fortune wavered between the two parties, the Abyssinians annexing the land with Byzantine help, then Īrān helping the Yemenī Saīf b. thī Ḥazan Ḥumairī in driving them out. After Saīf's death his son Ma'dī Karab succeeded him, again with Īrānian help, and it is interesting to note that one of the envoys sent from different parts of Arabia to congratulate the new king on his accession was 'Abdu'l-Muṭṭalib of the Republic of Mecca, the grandfather of the Apostle of Islam.

Semitic tribes in general and the Arabs in particular, have had a strong sense of individuality

¹ Khusrū II reigned, 590-628. A fairly connected account of Ghassān and Ḥīrah is given in the Muir's *Life of Mahomet*, London, 1858, Vol. I, ch. 3.

almost from times immemorial, and with them it is not the family but the individual and the tribe itself which counts. The social structure of the Arabs was founded on blood relationship, and as in ancient Greece, each tribe had its own god, so that the members of each tribe were united by the worship of a common divinity. It was genealogy rather the national sense that was all-important, and each clan and tribe had its own patronym, a common ancestor, from whom all the male and female members were supposed to have been descended. The society might be said to be patriarchal, for descent was counted only through males, and the head of the tribe was the Shaikh (literally, the *Elder*), who was perhaps regarded as the wisest man of the tribe. But we must here remember that this Shaikh was not originally a hereditary officer at all but was chosen spontaneously on the death of his predecessor in office, although in course of time the dignity tended to become hereditary. He was by no means the prototype of the Roman *pater-familias* and had no such authority as the Roman *patria potestas*, but was on the other hand, more a mediator and a peacemaker, so that 'he could only apply moral pressure'¹ on the recalcitrants. He had no doubt a very great authority, but supreme power he had

¹ J. Wellhausen, in *Historians' History of the World*, viii, 9.

none, and in the absence of any definite system of law much was left to the caprice of the individual. What political relations there were between tribe and tribe were based only on the sense of the morality of the parties, and as the Arabs had a very strong sense of honour there was a never-ending series of inter-tribal feuds. Like the ancient Greeks the Arabs also had country fairs such as those at Dūmatu'l-Jundal, Ḥajar, 'Ammān, Ḥaḍramaut, Ṣan'ā and Akad (near Mecca), but far from creating any feeling of oneness, they actually accentuated the political differences between the various groups. It is significant that not one of the Arab States enumerated above was independent, being under the suzerainty of Īrān, the Byzantine Empire or Abyssinia, and it was not in them but in the multifarious tribes mainly of Western Arabia that the Arab independence was to be seen. "It is well to bear this in mind, and so estimate, *quantæ molis erat romanam condere gentem*, what amount of labour was required to create a stable system of law independent of the individual."¹

Mecca had been the appanage of the Yemeni family of the Jurhumites who held sway there till the third century A.C. They were succeeded by the Qaḥṭānī Banī Khuzā'ah who became masters of Mecca and Southern Ḥijāz. These were in turn

¹ J. Wellhausen, *op. cit.*

driven out by Quṣaī who was descended in the fourth generation from Fihṛ, surnamed Quraish, the progenitor of the famous tribe of that name. Quṣaī administered the city in a very scientific manner, dividing the government into five departments namely :

(1) the Dāru'n-Nadwah, where sat the Nadwah or Senate, the consultative assembly to which members of the ruling family and the citizens over forty years of age were admitted ;

(2) the Liwā or banner, emblem of the ruler's military prowess ; this was given by him to the commander of the army in time of war ;

(3) the Rifāḍah, a poor rate levied chiefly for feeding poor pilgrims at the time of the annual congregation at Minā, a short distance from Mecca ;

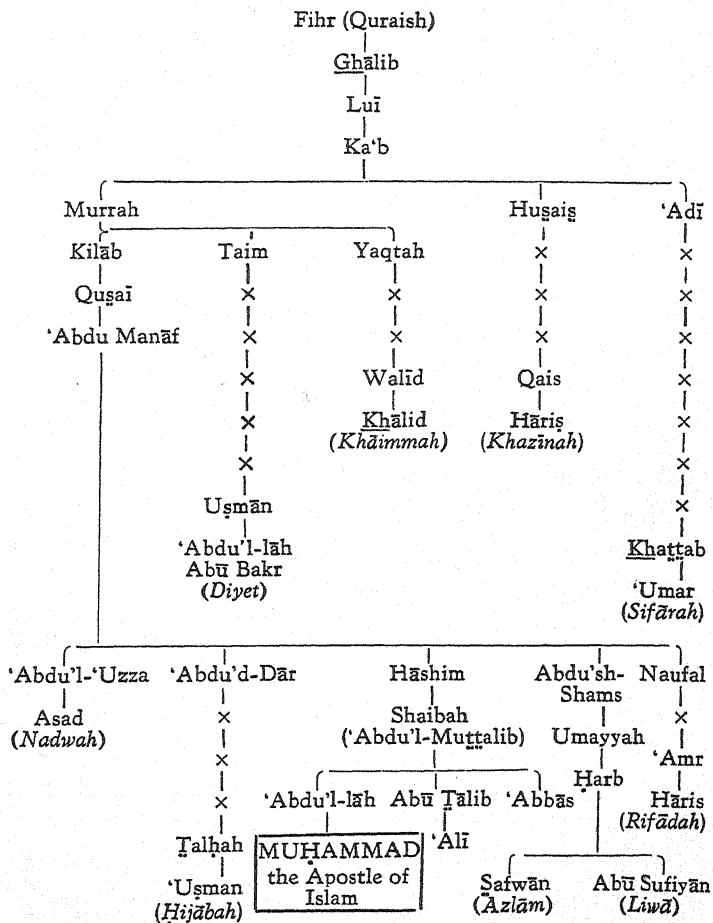
(4) the Siqāyah or administration of the wells, so important to the people of Arabia ;

(5) the Ḥijābah or the custody of the keys of the Ka'bah, emblematic of the trusteeship of the ancient Temple and the supervision of the ancient worship.

After the death of Quṣaī about 480 A.C. there was a protracted squabble for the division of these important functions among his descendants entailing constant transfers till, about the beginning of the seventh century A.C. these stood redivided

and redistributed among the descendants of Ka'b who was fourth in descent from Quraish.¹ This distribution is interesting to all students of Islamic

¹ Distribution of governmental functions about the time of Muḥammad, along with the ancestry of the incumbents:



institutions as the names of some of these office-bearers are writ large in the history of Islam itself.

(1) 'Umar b. Khattāb of the line of 'Adī had charge of the *Sifārah* or representation of the Quraish with other tribes and States.

(2) Hāriṣ b. Qais of the line of Huṣaiṣ had charge of the *Khazīnah* or public treasury and finance.

The remaining eight functions were divided among the descendants of Murrāh, the second son of Ka'b, namely :

(3) *Khāimmah* or the guardianship of the Council Chamber and the right of convening the Council and calling the people to arms ; this belonged to Khālid b. Walīd.

(4) The *Diyet* or Magistracy belonged to 'Abdu'l-lāh b. 'Uṣmān, later known as Abū Bakr.

All the other functions belonged to the descendants of Quṣai, Murrāh's grandson and the liberator of Mecca from Beni Khuzā'ah.

(5) Quṣai's own grandson, Asad b. 'Abdi'l-'Uzzā was the president of the Nadwah and the fountain-head of government.

(6) 'Uṣmān b. Ṭalḥah was in charge of the *Hijābah* and thus guardian of the keys of the Ka'bah.

(7) 'Abbās b. 'Abdu'l-Muṭṭalib was in charge of the *Siqāyah* or superintendence of the water

supply.

(8) The Rifādah or poor-rate was supervised by Hāriṣ b. 'Umar of the line of Naufal.

(9) The Liwā or the right to command the Quraish troops fell on the grandson of Umayyah, Abū Sufiyān.

(10) The last dignity, that of the charge of the divining arrows, was left for Abū Sufiyān's brother, Ṣafwān.

It was the established custom that the most aged of these magistrates was called Ra'īs, but after 'Abdu'l-Muṭṭalib's death there was really no one who could be regarded as having any authority over the others.

Muḥammad, who was to revolutionise human ideals, was born of 'Abdu'l-lāh b. 'Abdu'l-Muṭṭalib and his wife Āminah a few weeks after the successful attack on Mecca by Abrah el-Ashram. His father died before his birth, and not very long afterwards he was deprived of his worldly protectors by the death of his mother and his grandfather. After 'Abdu'l-Muṭṭalib's death the political affairs of Mecca became very serious, and the acute rivalry between the different branches of the house of Ka'b resulted in constant strife between the decemvirs and a state of utter lawlessness which increased as years passed by. It was not really till 'Abdu'l-Muṭṭalib's grandson-

had grown to manhood that the leaders of the Quraish were persuaded, maybe at his instance, to enter into an agreement so that the lives and property of the people might be safe. This was the famous *Ḥilfu'l-Fuḍūl*, a league formed in 595 A.C., for the protection of the inhabitants of Mecca, native and foreign, from their oppressors.¹ A few years afterwards we again hear of him checking the machinations of the Byzantines who had bribed an Arab, 'Uṣmān b. Ḥuwairiṣ, to try and conquer Mecca. The last fact worth alluding to here, which shows the great foresight and tact of the man who was doing all he could to keep the Meccan society together after his venerable grandfather's death, occurred at the time of the rebuilding of the Ka'bah, and the well-known episode² shows the great influence and the decisive voice which he had already acquired before the earliest revelation of the Qur'ān came to him at the age of forty.

III. THE ESSENCE OF THE QUR'ĀNIC STATE

We have come to a point where it will be

¹ See Ibn Hishām, *Sīrat* Vol. I, part 1, Wustenfeld edit., Goetttingen, 1858, p. 85.

² This refers to the quarrel over the lifting of the famous Black Stone and the arbitration of the young man who was destined to be the Messenger of God.

possible to deal with the essence of the Qur'ānic polity and without actual comparisons, we will now be able to appreciate the development of world-politics as evinced in the Qur'ān. The Book contains precepts and orders, at times detailed, at other times terse, and is full of historical allusions. Here only the political aspects of the Book will be discussed, and wherever precepts are accompanied with historical allusions, an attempt will be made to explain the text with reference to some other dependable authority.

As a prelude to this, a very brief sketch of the political life of the Apostle of Islam from the time of the first revelation to his death twenty-three lunar years later seems necessary. He was already forty when that remarkable verse, the one in which he, an illiterate man, was asked to 'read' and in which man's low origin and the importance of learning, the source of human exaltation, is so well depicted,¹ was revealed in a desert cave two miles from the city of Mecca. Knowledge of things with the exposition of the principles of nature was to be the keynote of the Qur'ān, the burden of all its precepts being that by them are 'revealed' to man the innermost secrets of the eternal laws of the universe, and it is perhaps with this thesis in view that the way of life as depicted in the Book

¹ Qur'ān, xcvi, 1 ff.

44 *Muslim Political Thought and Administration*

is said to be both 'ancient' and 'immutable'.¹

The first Pledges.—The underlying principles of the Islamic State can be discerned in the famous pledges of 'Aqabah in 620 and 622 A.C. One is amazed to find that the first of these two important pledges was taken by a handful of men, just twelve in number, who paid homage to Muḥammad in a lonely place outside the city walls of Mecca—a friendless man sitting under an acacia tree, the small group placing their hands in his and taking a vow that they would follow the path of universal Immutable Law, that they would worship no deity but God, that they would not steal or commit adultery, nor kill their offsprings, nor calumniate and slander anyone, and would be loyal in happiness and in sorrow.²

Herein is couched the germ of personal purification, social reform and strong legal action which were to follow in full force; and in the second pledge a couple of years later there is a definite promise to obey and, if need be, to defend the Apostle in everything, he, on his part, declaring that their interests and his were identical.³ The same year, harassed and tormented by the Meccans, the small body of the Muslims, with their great teacher, moved to Yeshrib, henceforth named the

¹ Q. xxx, 30.

² Ibn Hishām, I, 1, 288.

³ *Ibid.*, 293.

City of the Prophet, or shortly *the City*, el-Medīnah there to build the superstructure of that great brotherhood of Islam which was to know no racial, linguistic or geographical distinctions, by the masterly institution of the Muwākhāt, under which each Migrant from Mecca (Muhājir) was to be *in loco fraternalis*—like a brother—to one of the Helpers (Anṣār) of Medīna.¹

Centre shifted to Medīna.—In Medīna the Muslims had to deal with the native Jews, and the infant State had not only to take account of them but to protect them as well as the Muslims of the City. The great foresight and political acumen of Muḥammad is to be seen in the Charter he granted to the Jews in which, among other things, it was declared that they were as much the citizens of the new State as the Muslims themselves, that the two branches of the men of Yeṣrib were to form one composite nation, that the guilty would be punished whatever their faith, that both would be called upon to defend the State when need arose, and that 'all future disputes would be decided by the Messenger of God.'²

There is no doubt that if those who had thus been protected had held to their word, this great Charter of the freedom of conscience and common citizenship would have stood intact; but the Jews

¹ Ibn Hishām, I, 1, 344.

² *Ibid.*, 341.

soon became restive and openly revolted from the nascent state just when it was threatened by the freebooters of Mecca. Nothing daunted, the Prophet gave a Charter of freedom to the Christians of Najrān assuring them of their lives, property and religion, that they would have full liberty to practise their faith, that no bishop, monk or priest would be removed from his office, that no image or cross would be destroyed, that no tithes would be levied from them, and that they would not be required to furnish any troops.¹

History is a witness that these great charters came to nothing because of the armed hostility of the *protégés* themselves. The Jewish tribes had to be expelled one by one from Medīna, while the Prophet had to send an expedition against the Christians of Ghassān as they had done to death one of his peaceful envoys. Anyhow before his death he had united the whole of Arabia under one Sceptre and one Law, a thing unheard of in the annals of the country. This political miracle was visualised in the complete unity of thought and action of the myriads of God's creatures who were present on the occasion of the Sermon of

¹ El-Balathuri, *Futūḥu'l-Buldān*, I, ch. 14. Also see *Kitābu'l-Wāqida*, quoted in Muir, *op. cit.*, p. 299. I have not been able to find this in *Tabaqāt* published by Brill, Leyden.

Farewell delivered by the Apostle of Islam on 7th March, 632 A.C.,¹ a sermon which is one of the most important pronouncements in human history, and it was a matter of pride for those assembled on the plain of 'Arafāt that the task undertaken by their teacher barely twenty years before had been performed to everybody's satisfaction. The great Apostle died two months after this, on the 8th of June, 632 A.C.

Qur'ānic Argument.—Having cast a glance over some of the most important political acts of the man who has transformed the way of life of practically the whole human species, we shall now be able to deal with the subject in all its aspects. At the outset it should be noted that the method of political argument adopted in the Qur'ān is the historical method, wherein general precepts are explained with reference to instances from the history of Arabia and the neighbouring lands, and even when the Book enunciates an abstract notion, it nearly always illustrates it from conclusions from the past history or traditions of Arabian peoples like 'Ād and Ṣamūd, from Egypt or Palestine or the Eastern Roman Empire, 'Irāq or Īrān. It makes a definite distinction between the ancient monarchies and other nations and deals with the main causes of their decline so that it

¹ Ibn Hishām, II, 4, p. 968.

may be an object lesson for those still to come. For example, among the ancient monarchies Egypt is rightly put forward as the oldest and the most powerful, yet, as it says, Egypt crumbled to pieces because its rulers failed to recognise the insignificance of man and the omnipotence of the Divine Law as revealed to the chosen few. Moses and his brother Aaron were sent to the Pharoah of Egypt because he had "transgressed (the bounds of the Law)," ¹ and had become a "tyrant in the land." ² Another of his great crimes was that, instead of being the representative of the whole nation, he "divided it into so many different castes", ³ favouring one and maltreating the other, and so oppressing God's creatures with the anti-national cry of *divide et impere*, a doctrine which, as we know, works for a time but fails the moment the people realise their unity and begin to understand the full implications of the wrong done to them. Giving instances from the people of Israel, the Qur'ān describes how God had granted them all His favours and not only chose His prophets from among themselves but also made kings, ⁴ such as Saul who was made king when the race was oppressed and driven from its dwellings after the

¹ Q. xx, 43.

³ Q. xxviii, 4.

² Q. v, 84.

⁴ Q. v, 22.

death of the Prophet Moses.¹ It is remarkable how in this incident are depicted the real attributes of a good ruler, namely learning and strength, an axiom which is as true to-day as it was millenia ago.

The Qur'ān also generalises the causes of the decline of nations without reference to their actual government and lays down the principle that "God does not change the condition of a people till they have themselves changed their psychology."² As the Laws of the Universe are not unjust in themselves each people has first been provided with a measure of correct conduct, and it is only after its transgression that it is wiped out and replaced by another nation.³ It is in the order of the Universe that, like the human species, which is of the essence of the State, the collective people should also have their rise and fall, and when once the national ailments have become incurable, the people, like a human being, dies according to the application of pre-ordained Law, giving place to a new and a more vigorous race.⁴

God the Ruler.—The Qur'ān is a mine of precepts about the unity of Godhead and the

¹ Q. ii, 246-47.

² Q. x, 14.

³ Q. xviii, 11.

⁴ Q. x, 50.

Kingship of God on earth.¹ This entails three distinct conceptions which have a direct bearing of the political aspects of the Book. Unity of Godhead as the Ruler naturally implies legal unity and, as the Qur'ān distinctly says, as these legal concepts are founded upon—nay, are identical with—universal immutable laws,² this legal unity must be based on these concepts. The second thing which must be borne in mind is that, in the same way as the subjects of a king are all of them of the same station in life in relation to him, the Kingship of God means that the members of the human species are necessarily of the same order in regard to Him; and thirdly, that man is utterly powerless before the Universal Law and his sole concern in the realm of the so-called law-making can be to try and discover the intricacies of that Law in much the same manner as the scientist discovers the forces of nature and the economist discovers the natural relation between man and economic wealth. The reign of Universal Law also implies that those who accept it, or at least consent to live under its sway, are immune from harm, but those who transgress it lose the protection of the State in much the same

¹ Such as Q. iii, 26; iii, 189; xi, 45; xxiii, 85-87; xxxi, 27; xlv, 36; lvii, 10; lxxv, 12; lxxvii, 1; lxxii, 9.

² Q. xxx, 30.

manner as the transgressors of the law to-day are liable to be punished—imprisoned, fined or even beheaded. God is the real ruler of the world, His Law is supreme, while man is His vicegerent,¹ and of the human species He appoints kings and magistrates whose most important duty is to do justice according to the Law and never to be led away by personal desires²—such is the teaching of the Qur'ān; and this is the ideal of unselfish justice which was a definite break with the past and which, in turn, is regarded as the most sacred right of the citizen the world over.

The Principle of Order.—There are a few things which the Qur'ān abhors more than mischief and disorder, and verses about this phenomenon, which eats into the body-politic, are interspersed throughout the Book. When God creates man as His vicegerent, the great misgiving in the mind of the angels is that man would shed his fellows' blood and cause disorder.³ Again God makes the Israelites enter into a covenant with Him that "they would not shed each other's blood or turn any one out of his house."⁴ This admonition is repeated in a number of places,⁵ perhaps because it is necessary to counteract "the natural animosity

¹ Q. xxvii, 62.

² As when David was admonished to do justice; Q. xxxvi, 27.

³ Q. ii, 4.

⁴ Q. ii, 84.

⁵ Thus Q. xxxix, 36.

of man towards man.”¹ Disorder is regarded as “worse than murder,”² and those who provoke it deserve “the curse of God,”³ while the State is told to try and end it by peaceable means if possible, but if necessary, to strike at its root by force of arms.⁴ Those who cause political turmoil should not be obeyed⁵ but should be killed or banished, as their action is likely to “war against God and His Messenger.”⁶ It is related how when Abraham made Mecca his home and the home of his progeny, the first prayer he offered was to “make the City a haven of peace and prosperity” for ever,⁷ and the secret of the success of Islamic polity is said to lie in the complete unity of those who were once inimical to one another.⁸ The Muslims are ordered to be completely united, kind and brotherly to each other,⁹ otherwise their end would be the same as that of the other transgressors of the Law, who might pretend anything they like, but are really at the root of all disorder.¹⁰

This is entirely in accordance with the principles of Islamic warfare which is described, among other places, in a series of verses in Chapter II,

¹ Q. xx, 123.

² Q. xlvii, 25.

³ Q. xxvi, 51-52.

⁴ Q. xix, 35.

⁵ Q. xlix, 9-10.

⁶ Q. ii, 217.

⁷ Q. viii, 39.

⁸ Q. v, 33.

⁹ Q. xlviii, 24.

¹⁰ Q. ii, 11.

where it is clearly indicated that war should be waged only against those who wage war on the State, and the sword should be sheathed the moment they desist and the rule of Divine Law is again supreme.¹

Peace and Obedience.—The application of this principle is according to the very essence of the Qur'ān, for the two basic doctrines the Preceptor taught are couched in the two pithy terms, "Īmān and Islām," the one meaning the rule of Peace and the other that of Obedience. And this is in turn exactly according to the modern conception of Sovereignty, for without obedience to a central authority there can be no State worth the name. Moreover, as the Law of God is regarded as supreme and universal, so it is in the nature of things that man is ordered to obey His exposition of the Law as "revealed" to the Prophet.² The recalcitrants are admonished that the so-called "law" as expounded by their forefathers was not proper as they were not wise and were unable to guide others owing to the imperfections of their knowledge of Universal Law.³ The Muslims are told that, if there be any division among them over anything, they have

¹ Q. ii, 190-193.

² Such as in Q. iii, 32; viii, 20; xlviii, 15; iv, 80.

³ Q. iii, 147.

only to turn to this Law as expounded by God through His Messenger, and they would find all they want.¹ Not only passive obedience is demanded, but the citizens are required, if need be, to spend their all, to bear suffering, hunger and hardship gladly in order to spread the Law of God upon the earth.² Needless to say, this rule was implicitly followed by the Prophet himself during the twelve fateful years at Mecca, when he was harassed, stoned, persecuted and conspired against, and with his companions, who saw in him all that was good and noble, forced to move to a place two hundred miles away.

Law and Justice.—The Qur'ān lays down a correct estimate of the needs of man when it says that alongside many other things the supreme sacrifices in the cause of the rule of Law may seem repugnant to the individual, still they are enjoined as they ultimately lead to the good of the commonwealth.³ This really points out the essential antagonism between the individual needs and the needs of the body-politic and the possibility of sacrificing property, life, and all one holds dearest in the cause of the collective whole. It is again this principle which makes the Qur'ān declare that in "retaliation" in the matter of

¹ Q. iv, 59.

² Q. 11, 155-157; ii, 216.

³ Q. ii, 216.

murder is the very life of the people,¹ for it is manifest that without this sanction there will be no security of life. The general legislation of the Qur'ān is not confined to crimes like murder and theft,² or to the great principle of retaliation which helped in a striking way to make the warring Arabs one nation and to unite antagonistic peoples under the sceptre of Islam or Obedience to the Law, but it also lays down the broad principles of evidence and even legal conveyancing, such as that by which it is enjoined that transactions like those of debt, etc., should be put in writing,³ that it is not necessary to write down ordinary transactions of sale, and that two witnesses are enough to prove the fact of a transaction.⁴ We can see not only what great strides the principles of law had taken as early as the seventh century of the Christian era in a country like Arabia which had not known any system of law till only a few years before, but also the lasting effects these principles have had on the general conditions of law in vogue in our own day.

This leads us directly to the great importance which the doctrine of justice has in the Qur'ānic

¹ Q. i, 79.

² Thus, Q. v, 36 ; xxiv, 2.

³ Q. ii, 282.

⁴ Q. ii, 213.

system. The very basis of apostlehood is said to be justice between man and man, for it is related that the patriarchs and prophets of old were sent with books of Divine Law that they might be able to decide internecine feuds,¹ and the Apostle of Islam declares that he has been commanded to be just.² Judges are ordered to do justice³ and not to be led away by personal likes or dislikes, love or hate,⁴ and witnesses are required to tell the whole truth.⁵ At the same time the salutary principle is laid down that whoever makes a false prosecution should be punished with an iron hand. These principles are such as would adorn the legal system of any State, whatever its basis, and whoever ponders on them with an unbiassed mind must clearly see their world-wide application.

Social Reform.—It hardly comes within the scope of this chapter to enumerate the social reforms accomplished by the Qur'ān in a society which knew of no bonds save that of the tribe, and its seemingly impossible feat of that unity and brotherhood which the Qur'ān describes as that union of hearts of erstwhile enemies and the brotherhood of warring elements, and admonishes

¹ Q. xlii, 15.

² Q. iv, 58.

³ Q. v, 8.

⁴ Q. ii, 283.

⁵ For instance, Q. xxiv, 4.

those who surrender themselves to Divine Law to hold the rope of God tightly and never to separate.¹ In a word it says that the duty of the Muslims is to "enjoin what is right and to prevent what is wrong,"² and even goes to such details as the necessity of one who wishes to enter someone else's house not to do so unless he has been permitted by the owner,³ that even your own children should ask your leave to enter your room at certain hours when you need privacy,⁴ that the traders should always weigh and measure their ware according to the standard weights and measures,⁵ and that theft, adultery, scandal-mongering and other wrongs should be completely eradicated.⁶ These and many other social reforms are interspersed throughout the Book, and they were not put forward merely as ideals, but the proud Arabs were made to practise them. Thus the nomads of the desert were transformed into great statesmen, generals, merchants and emperors, and made superior even to those who boasted a civilisation dating back to thousands of years.

¹ Q. iii, 103.

² Q. ii, 5.

³ Q. xxiv, 27.

⁴ Q. lix, 24. It is remarkable how this and other salutary principles have been adopted in the non-Muslim West.

⁵ Q. xi, 85.

⁶ Q. ix, 12. This was also the purport of one of the pledges of 'Aqabah also called the Pledge of Women, while in the second pledge the duty of defence was added.

Counsel.—There is a place, and a very important one, for counsel in the Qur'ānic State. When the qualities of good Muslims are enumerated when they are said to put their trust in God, when they are regarded as shunners of evil, when they are said to be brave defenders of their rights, they are also praised for taking others' counsel in time of need.¹ Not only that, but the Apostle, while he is enjoined to trust only in God when he has made up his mind, is also advised to consult even those who are his enemies at heart.² It is truly this democratic spirit, taking count of *numbers* as well as *efficiency*, which made the religion of the Qur'ān capable of converting the world, if not in so many words, at least so far as its main doctrines were concerned. This spirit is further evidenced by the principle on which the Qur'ānic taxation is based. As a matter of fact, with the simple life which the Apostle himself led, the system of government instituted by the Qur'ān needed very little money for its upkeep, and provided an ideal for an efficient and inexpensive government for all times to come. The only taxes mentioned in the Qur'ān are the

¹ Q. xxii, 37.

² Q. iii, 159. There is also a very apt ḥadīṣ in Muslim (*Kitābu'l-Faḍāil*, II, 264) where the Apostle is said to have declared to eminent men sitting round him that they were better acquainted with worldly affairs than himself.

Zakāt¹ which came to mean 2½ per cent of the capital, the Jiziah² which came to mean a tax on exemption from military service of those who did not form part of the Muslim body-politic, and the Kharāj³ which was a tax on land, apart from the irregular booty taken in war.⁴ So far as the Zakāt and the booty are concerned the Qur'ān names the various heads under which they must be spent, only a part going towards the upkeep of the State the rest being divided up in such a manner that some of the wealth of the rich should go to support the poorest and the neediest of the land, while the money which bore the brunt of governmental expenditure came from other sources of income.

Laws of War.—But it is when we turn to international affairs, the laws of war, diplomacy and alliances, that the thoroughness of the Qur'ān really comes home to us. The first principle about war revealed to the Prophet was that sanction should be given to fight because the Muslims “had been wronged” by their opponents,⁵ and war should be waged only against those who had actively warred against the infant community⁶ and should continue till

¹ Q. ix, 60.

² Q. viii, 1.

³ Q. xxii, 39.

⁴ Q. xxiii, 72.

⁵ Q. viii, 40.

⁶ Q. lx, 8.

"disorders should be set at rest,"¹ while if the opponents had got an idea of making peace it should not be denied to them.² It must be remembered, however, that it is not the policy of the Qur'ān that the people should enter into an alliance with the enemies of Universal Law,³ and once war is declared no quarter should be shown to them,⁴ while those who defend all they hold sacred are promised the highest reward.⁵ It is remarkable how in a series of revelations a difference is made between those non-Muslims who have entered into an understanding with the Muslims, and those who have broken their pledged word and taken up arms against them, and it is definitely laid down that on no account should the Muslims break their pledges with those who have kept faith with them.⁶

When we come to the great clemency which the Qur'ān ordains towards prisoners of war we see the great progress already made in the character of the human society, for with the battle of Badr⁷ the system of keeping the prisoners alive and even releasing them on the payment of a small ransom or for doing something useful, such as teaching the children how to read, was introduced.⁸ The

¹ Q. ii, 193.² Q. viii, 61.³ Q. viii, 139.⁴ Q. ix, 123; xlvii, 5.⁵ Q. iv, 74.⁶ Q. ix, 1-12.⁷ 624 A.C.⁸ Comp. Q. viii, 70.

same Arabs, even the women of whom showed no compassion to the dying and the dead on the battlefield,¹ were being prepared for the great day when the Prophet should enter the city of his birth triumphant at the head of thousands, but with the stern order not to pursue any of those who had hunted them out and forced them to leave their hearth and home.²

Toleration.—And here we come to the great principle of toleration so well enumerated in the Qur'ān. We must remember that this was still the seventh century of the Christian era and the principle of toleration of religious belief was utterly unknown to the world which was still to pass through the agony of the Crusades, the storm and stress of the wars of religion in Germany and elsewhere, the inquisitions in Spain, the forced conversions in Saxony and other parts of Europe, the Protestant and Catholic persecutions in England, centuries afterwards, while as we have already noticed, the two great Empires of Persia and Byzantium were just doing all they could to enforce homogeneity of religious belief. It was

¹ The reference is to the conduct of Abū Sufiyan's wife, Hind, who tore open the body of the Prophet's uncle, Ḥamzah after the action of Uhud, 625 A.C., drank his blood and actually gnawed his heart! see *Ibn Hishām*, Vol. II, p. 555.

² For an account of the capture of Mecca, January 630 A.C., see *Ibn Hishām*, II, 802.

therefore something novel and startling in the history of political principles that the Qur'ān should take the variety of religious beliefs in a State almost taken for granted, and building from these premises, lay down for all time the magnificent ideal that there is to be "no compulsion in religion."¹ As Moses, when he approached Pharaoh, was admonished to speak gently,² so in addressing one who is of another belief, only the most conciliatory speech should be used.³ It is remarkable that the ideal should be broadcast from the mouth of the man who was himself the butt of all kinds of persecution! He is told that if only one part of the population cares to adopt the faith so dear to him and his followers, he should exercise the utmost patience till he gets the final decision from God as to the conduct of the other part.⁴ Although the Muslims are forbidden to be friendly to those belonging to the other camp or such as are hypocritical in their behaviour,⁵ the Book makes a clear distinction between them and those who, like some Christians of those days, were mild and humane according to the teachings of their own Prophets.⁶ So far as the Meccans are concerned, a whole chapter is addressed to them

¹ Q. ii, 256; 1, 45.

² Q. xx, 44.

³ Q. xiv, 115.

⁴ Q. vii, 86.

⁵ Q. iii, 118.

⁶ Q. v, 82.

ending in the great decree of toleration, "Unto you your religion, and unto me mine."¹ It is remarkable that although the orientation of religious thought has been on the whole towards the application of this idea, still some of the most important parts of the world in our own times are showing the old barbarian spirit of religious persecution and are disdaining to own peoples of the same speech and country because they happen to follow religious beliefs distinct from the majority of the population.²

Internationalism.—We now come to the last principle which would wind up the essence of the Qur'ānic State. As has been seen above, when the Qur'ānic principles were revealed, not only Arabia but the whole world was rent asunder by warring castes, nations, castes and classes, and Islam struck a new note by preaching internationalism. It was an extremely bold advance, but it was an advance in a line with other principles expounded. Although the Qur'ān accepts the doctrine that men are divided into classes and that ranks are justifiable so that personal ability may be tested,³ yet it is definitely laid down that the institution of castes and classes antagonistic to

¹ Q. ch. cix.

² Such is the case in our own day in the Germany of the Nazis.

³ Q. vi, 166; xvii, 21.

each other is a kind of punishment meted out to the transgressors of the Law,¹ and that whatever nations and tribes exist, their physical origin is uniform, and they are justified only because they help us to differentiate between man and man. Then another ideal is laid down that nobility depends not in belonging to a particular family, race, tribe or nation, but in being noble of character and personal conduct.² The life of the man who could get his own cousin married to a freed man,³ who could make a freed man lead the flower of the Quraish nobility,⁴ who could in the heyday of his power live the life of the poorest of the population, who had no thought but that of the welfare of the downtrodden and the oppressed, is a living instance of the breaking of the old bonds. We know that the difficulty of the upholders of internationalism has ever been the seemingly impassable barriers of race, language and clime, and however pious his ideals and aspirations, man has not been able to overcome these barriers and to institute the much-vaunted "Parliament of Man, the Federation of the World." The Apostle of Islam showed a path to mankind, the path of Universal Law, which, differently to the rigid limitations of race, country,

¹ Q. vi, 65.

² Q. xlix, 13.

³ Zainab, 'Abdu'l-Muṭṭalib's daughter, was married to Zaid b. Ṣābit, erstwhile slave of the Prophet.

⁴ On the occasion of the Muṭāh campaign, 629 A.C.

language and geographical configuration, could be accepted by all,¹ and by allying to those from Rome, Persia, Abyssinia, Arabia and the world beyond who accepted that Law, not only laid down an ideal but actually put it into practice² such as no man has ever done it since.

¹ The Urdu magazine *Tarjumān'ul-Qur'ān*, Hyderabad Deccan, Vol. III (1352 H.) has a good discussion on pp. 37 ff. and 103 ff.

² The general effects of Islam on legal thought are ably delineated in the masterly work, *The Legacy of Islam*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1931 in the chapter on "Law and Society," by Professor Santillana of Rome.

Chapter 3

IBN ABĪ'R-RABĪ' (Ninth Century A.C.)

I. INTRODUCTION

IT is only recently that attention has been drawn to a scientific study of the political thought of the early Muslims and even they have been dealt with by the Moderns more as writers on ethics and philosophy than as political thinkers. This does not surprise us much. Political philosophy and the science of administration were not known as such in the West till comparatively recent years, and the Europeans of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when a study of these sciences began to take shape, were either too ignorant of political thought among the Mussulmans or were too prejudiced against the Muslims to have any clear vision of the services rendered to humanity by their religion and specialised culture. As a matter of fact while the period between the fall of Rome in 476 and the rise of Charlemagne more than 300 years later was a dark spot in the

history of the West, where civil wars, religious intolerance, and almost utter lack of government were the order of the day, among Oriental peoples it was an era of enlightenment, orderly progress and the enjoyment of the best God had given to man. This progress steadily went on both in mundane and spiritual spheres for another five hundred years, and Alhazen, Rhazes, Avicenna and Averroes became household names in Europe as some of the foremost thinkers of the world. But it was only natural that such as had written on administration should not have much of a following here, as political science had not yet drawn their attention and learned men who ought to have known better, wrangled on the puerile concepts such as whether God had been crucified in the person of Christ by the legate of the Emperor of Rome!¹

No doubt a certain amount of incentive was given to Muslim thought by the translations of Greek authors into Syriac and Arabic at the time of the early Abbasids, but the immediate influence of these translations might easily be exaggerated. As has been said elsewhere, the Arab world was not cognisant of Aristotle's work on

¹ This was one of the arguments levelled against the upholders of the supremacy of the Papacy by the Imperialists and is found in Dante: *De Monarchia*, Bk. II; see Pollock: *History of the Science of Politics*, ch. II.

"Politics" while the other political work ascribed to him, namely *The Constitution of Athens*, has been unearthed only in our own time, and the only Greek thought on political matters consisted of Plato's *Republic* and *Laws*.¹ The early Muslim writers on politics no doubt drew a certain amount of inspiration from the translations; but we must remember that the thought itself, with its multitude of illustrations from Persian, Arabic and Indian sources, was purely Oriental in essence, and the time had not yet arrived for the westernisation of thought at the hands of Muslim thinkers of the West such as Ibn Bājjah, Ibn Ṭufail and Ibn Rushd.²

There is a third point which we have to bear in mind. The divorce of ethics from politics with such disastrous effects for the world did not become the fashion till after Macchiavelli had made politics the purely mundane, material science that it now is. The early Muslim writers could not even think that a study of political science was at all possible without setting a strong ethical background for the action of the rulers or that any country could be successfully administered without the salutary effect of the interaction

¹ See chapter on *Al-Fārābī's Political Theories* Rosenthal: *Plato's Philosophy in the Islamic World*, I. C., 1940, p. 411.

² Ibn Bājjah ('Avempace') of Saragossa, died 1138; Ibn Ṭufail of Guadix, died 1185; Ibn Rushd ('Averroes') of Cordova, died 1193.

of administrative with ethical principles.

The Background.—Here we will deal with "the earliest philosophical treatise" by a Muslim, in which are couched the principles of politics and administration.¹ The work in question is called *Sulūku'l-Mālīk fī tadbīri'l-Mamālik* and is by Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Abī'r-Rabī', surnamed Shihābu'd-dīn, compiled, it appears, by the order of the eighth Abbasid Caliph, Mu'taṣim, the son of the great Hārūnu'r-Rashīd and the successor of his own brother Māmūn.² This was perhaps the most resplendent period of the Abbasid Caliphate, and the lustre of Hārūn's epoch coupled with the progressive and highly erudite atmosphere of Māmūn's reign, that had made Baghdād the centre "not only of the Muslim world but of the world at large."³ The State was then the home of such intellectual giants as the traditionist Bukhārī, the historian Wāqidī, the legislator Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, one of the four great Imāms of Sunnī jurisprudence, the Shī'ite Imām 'Alī-a'r-Riḍā and the poet Abū Tammām, besides such non-Muslims

¹ Thus in Brockelmann: *Gesch., d. arab. Litteratur*, I, 209.

² Hārūn, 786-808; Māmūn, 813-833; Mu'taṣim, 833-842. Name of the work, *Way of the Ruler and the Government of the State*. The book has been lithographed at Cairo, 1286 H. and 1329 H. Ref. Brockelmann I, 209; Ḥājī Khalfah: *Kaṣḥfu'z-ẓunūn*, No. 7239; *Cat. of the Bibli. Nation.*, No. 2448; Goldziher: *Abh.*, I, 66.

³ Weil: *Gesch. d. Chalifen*, II, ch. on Mu'taṣim, pp. 295-336, Urdu tr. by Prof. J. Rehman, "An-Nāẓir," Lucknow, Jan. and Feb. 1937.

as Ḥunain b. Ishāq el-'Ibādī and Jurjīs b. Bakht-ishū', both of whom were prominent in making the Greek system of medicine known to the Oriental world. Just before Māmūn's death in 217/833, was founded the Baitu'l-Ḥikmat or 'the House of Wisdom,' and it was under its roof that most of Plato's and Aristotle's ethical and philosophical works were done into Arabic. It was thus six hundred years before the Classics became a source of inspiration to Europe that the first rays of their revived form became visible in the East, rays which were to illumine the West by the Latin translations of Arabic renderings of the Greek and Alexandrine writers.¹

Administration.—The system of government in Mu'taṣim's time had not been elaborated to the extent reached some years later, still it was already fairly complicated. The ministry or Dīwānu'l-'Azīz was divided into a number of departments such as the Dīwānu'l-Kharāj (Revenue Department), Dīwānu'l-Jund (Army Department), Dīwānu'sh-Shurṭah (Police Department), etc., while the Caliph al-Mahdī inaugurated the appointment of a Ḥājib or Lord Chamberlain, whose chief function consisted in introducing foreign ambassadors and other representatives to

¹ For a general discussion of the translations see O' Leary : *Arabic Thought*, London, 1922, ch. IV.

the Caliph and performing other duties of a like nature. As regards the judiciary, there was a Qāḍīu'l-Quḍāt or Chief Justice at the capital with Qāḍīs and 'Ādils interspersed throughout the State, and it was regarded as of the utmost importance that these should be entirely independent of the Executive in all their actions and judgments. It was a matter of principle that the 'ẓimmī' or protected non-Muslim sects were entitled to have their own civil suits adjudged by their own judges without any governmental interference, while criminal cases in which any citizen of the State, Muslim, or non-Muslim, was arraigned, went to the Šāhibu'l-Maẓālim functioning under the Department of Criminal Justice, which was presided over by the Caliph himself.¹

In the Islamic State, as had already developed, there was to be seen an almost perfect religious and racial toleration such as was not to be met with in the Western world for a millennium to come. Mu'taṣim was himself a man of a strong character, and it was no doubt his aptitude for ruling a vast empire that made Māmūn appoint him his successor to the exclusion of his own son 'Abbās, a feature rarely to be met with in history. Although at constant war with the Christian

¹ See chapter on *Al-Mamardi* and *Qabūs Namah*.

Byzantine Emperor, Theophilus, Mu'taṣim's court was open to men belonging to all races and professing all religions alike. His first Prime Minister was a Christian Faḍl b. Marwān and he kept the Nestorian Christians more or less in charge of the Academy of the Baitu'l-Hikmat. He was the upholder of perfect equality of the races inhabiting his vast empire and promoted those belonging to the Turkish race, such as Afshīn, Ītākh and Ashnās, with the result that he came to be hated by those of his own kith and kin, and he left Baghdād, the centre of Arabic culture, for a new capital at Sāmarrā rather than bow to the racial communalists of the capital. We can well realise the extent of the toleration shown by him when we know that his next-door neighbour, the Emperor Theophilus, the upholder of a theology which "made him a stern bigot," and a religious maniac and who did not allow any one in his dominions to worship images, even to the extent that his own wife, the Empress Theodora, an image worshipper herself, had to pretend to her husband that the images in one of her rooms were only dolls, when he once chanced to see them! Theophilus was so intolerant that he had a famous painter of religious subjects imprisoned and flogged, and put under the rack monks who dared to act against his edict prohibiting any

display of public worship.¹

In spite of his broadmindedness, however, Mu'taṣim could not tolerate any attempt at insubordination or revolt, and laid his heavy hand on any recalcitrant however influential and powerful he might be. He put down without much concern, the rising of Babek Khurramī who wanted to upset the prevalent social system and establish a king of nihilist communism, and later when he knew that his own military commander, for whom he had done so much, the Turk Afshīn, was in league with his enemies and was really a hypocrite at heart, he forgot all the services he had rendered to him, and had him forthwith imprisoned.

When did Ibn Abī'r-Rabī' Write?—Before dealing with the work proper it is better to discuss in short compass the question of the period in which the author wrote. This is necessary as some doubt has been cast whether such a compendious work, complete in all its details, could have been composed as early as Mu'taṣim's reign. While the German Arabicist, Brockelmann, is not able to specify the exact period of the author and only says that "it is really a much later work" than Mu'taṣim's reign,² Jurjī Zaidān, the

¹ Theophilus, Emperor of Byzantium, 829-842. For these and other curiosities see Finlay: *History of Greece*, II, 142-160.

² Brockelmann, *op. cit.*

well-known Christian author of modern Egypt, is more explicit in assigning the work to Musta'sim's period. He gives the following reasons for his surmise :¹

(1) The whole work is compiled in the form of columns and tables much after the fashion of genealogical trees and is perfect to a fault, showing a completeness not possible for one who preceded the philosophers al-Kindī and al-Fārābī.²

(2) The name Shihābu'dīn is not found in histories and encyclopædias of the Abbasid period before Ibn Nadīm's *Fihrist* which was completed in 338/950.

(3) It is probable that the name of the Caliph was mixed up and the work was compiled not in Mu'tasim's but in Musta'sim's reign, so that it was antedated by a careless scribe by more than 400 years.

Taking the first point, it has already been mentioned that a large number of the ethical and philosophical writings of the Greeks had been rendered into Arabic both by independent agencies and under the ægis of the Baitu'l-Ḥikmat under Hārūn and Māmūn, and an impetus had been given to independent thought thereby.

¹ Jurjī Zaidān : *History of Arabic Literature* (in Arabic) Cairo, 1911, II, 214.

² Al-Kindī, died about 873. Fārābī, 870-950.

Moreover we know that al-Kindī was old enough in Mu'taṣim's reign to be the tutor to the Caliph's son, and our author must have breathed in the same erudite atmosphere as the one surrounding the better known philosopher. It is almost an insult to the period following 'the Augustan Age of Arabic thought' such as the reign of Māmūn has been dubbed, to say that it could not produce the compendium which has been attributed to it. As far as the epithet 'Shihābu'd-dīn' is concerned, Jurjī Zaidān rightly says that such names are not met with in the early years of the Abbasid dynasty, but we should remember that our author's name was Muḥammad, and Shihābu'd-dīn and cognate phrases were originally not names at all but were rather meant as laudatory epithets which might have been added later by a scribe who knew the worth of the writer. This epithet means 'the Meteor of the Faith,' and it is just possible that as our author's fame was eclipsed by thinkers who came after him, a well-meaning friend might have likened him to a meteorite. We should not conclude in any case that there was no such person as Muḥammad, son of Aḥmad, son of Abī'r-Rabī' in Mu'taṣim's reign simply because a certain laudatory epithet appears along with his name.

We now come to the last point in Zaidān's argument, that it is possible that the name

Mu'taṣim might have been mixed up with Musta'ṣim, as in Musta'ṣim's reign names like Shihābu'd-dīn had begun to appear.¹ Now, as we are aware, while Mu'taṣim's reign was the azimuth of Abbasid glory, that of Musta'ṣim was its nadir, the dynasty—and the Caliphate—disappearing entirely through the lethargy and indolence of the court, the machinations of traitors and power of Hulāgū. Musta'ṣim's was hardly the time for the analysis and construction of ethical, military and political principles by a distinguished thinker like our author. Then we have the very definite internal evidence that the author was commanded to compile the work,² and while describing the command the author says that it was his good fortune that his master, Mu'taṣim had the qualities of an ideal monarch and knew how to utilise these qualities to the best advantage. That was, says the author, why many nations and countries had bowed down to him, wars had ceased, ignorance had disappeared, giving place to knowledge, and no one dared to tyrannise over others.³ This could hardly be a description of Musta'ṣim's reign, while it was a very apt description of conditions prevalent in Mu'taṣim's time. More than that,

¹ Musta'ṣim, 1226-1242.

² *Sulūk*, Preface, p. 3.

³ *Sulūk*, 22.

when dealing with the necessary requisite of a good wazīr, he says that it was God's Grace that a man had been made their wazīr whose language led the linguists of the Arabic speaking world by the nose strings.¹ Now we are fully aware that Mu'taṣim's last wazīr, Ibn Zayyāt was distinguished for his great learning in the language and literature of the Arabs and that he had risen from the ranks by dint of sheer ability and hard work, remaining wazīr right up to the accession of Mutawakkil. There can thus be no doubt that the work with which we are dealing belongs to Mu'taṣim's reign, i.e., to the early part of the third century A.H. and not to the seventh century A.H. where Zaidān puts it.

We now come to Brockelmann. In the first volume of his great *History of Arabic Literature*, he definitely says that "the work is the first Islamic political writing that we possess," but later he is startled to find a close parallel with a number of later works such as the Neo-Pythagorean Oikonomikos, Ibn Buṭlān's *Taqwīmu's-Sihḥa* and *Akhlāq-i-Mushajjar* (written in 655/1256), coming to the conclusion that the *Sulūk* is a much later work.² He gives a list of manuscripts of the work found in Leiden, Naples

¹ *Sulūk*, 124.

² Brockelmann : *Gesch., d. arab. Litt.*, erster Suppl., 1927; p. 372.

and Istanbul, and it seems that all these agree with the script in the two printed editions of the book in ascribing the period to Mu'taṣim's reign. Against this definiteness, the mere fact of their being certain later "parallels," should not lead us to the conclusion that the work was a copy of these "parallels," for, equally well they might easily have been copied from portions of the *Sulūk*. It is perhaps these considerations which make Brockelmann undecided about his conclusion, for even in his supplement he does not contradict his earlier assertion that the work is definitely "the first Islamic political writing that we possess."

Taking all these points into fullest consideration, along with the internal evidence produced above, one is bound to come to the conclusion that at least the politico-ethical parts of the work were compiled in Mu'taṣim's reign, and thus it takes precedence over Fārābī's works on political theory by many decades.

II. SUBJECT-MATTER

Man among Other Creatures.—To quote Zaidān, the compendium "is of great utilitarian value, dealing with politics, sociology, philosophy, physics, mathematics and music, and is divided into

four parts namely, (i) Introduction; (ii) Principles of Ethics and its subdivisions; (iii) The significance of human wisdom and its regulation; (iv) Politics, its divisions and its organisation. All these topics are further subdivided into chapters, and their enunciation and rules are described in columnar form or tables in the best of style."¹ A fourth of the work deals directly with political principles and nearly another fourth with the principles of human organisation.

Our author begins his work with the position of Man among other living creatures. He says that every being that God has created, falls into one or other of two groups, the higher and the lower, and it needs no demonstration to show that the existing has preference over the non-existent, the living over the non-living and those who know over those who do not know, while those endowed with the power of movement, intention and will are definitely superior to those who are not. Of all creatures, Man is the only one who is possessed of all the superior complexes here enumerated, along with a faculty which is not shared by any other creature, and that is the faculty of the keen perception of probable consequences. He is endowed with thought and judicious discretion and chooses what he feels is best.

¹ Zaidān. II, 215.

He tries to attain the highest station in life possible and succeeds in his attempt whenever he does not deviate from this sense of judicious discretion and perception of consequences, and whenever he is not overpowered by his evil desires.¹

The Social Nature of Man and its Consequences.—Man being a thinking animal, has naturally two chief faculties, the thinking faculty and the animal faculty, and his whole being is in a way suspended between the two, sometimes swaying towards one and sometimes towards the other. As an animal, he prefers a quick satisfaction of his desires, while his thinking faculty leans towards the best possible consequences of his actions. It is obvious that, when the *differentia* between Man and other living creatures is just this thinking faculty based on human common-sense, Man without it would be no better than an animal.²

Now, this thinking, foreseeing animal called Man is so created that he cannot fulfil his wants by himself and needs others' help for the purpose. A carpenter wants certain of his necessities to be made by the blacksmith, the blacksmith needs help from workers in mines, the latter from labourers and so on, so that every industry is a

¹ *Sul.* 7.

² *Ibid.*, 24. Compare this idea of Man being a *thinking* animal with Aristotle's definition of his being a *Political* animal in his *Politics*, I, 8.

complement of the other. If man had been able to satisfy all his wants by himself there would have been no need for mutual help and co-operation, and it is really this action and interaction of wants which fixes wages, prices, profit and loss and all other economic phenomena.¹ Moreover, from the nature of things, besides manufacturers and wage-earners, no one can lead a self-sufficient life, and apart from marital relations² every individual is dependent on a host of other individuals. It is, therefore, necessary for them to gather together in groups so that mutual help and intercourse should be facilitated. God has, therefore, created in Man a sense of liking for his fellow-man as well as strong leaning towards collective action.³

Gatherings of the population of a country are of two kinds, rural or agricultural and urban. The importance of the rural units is said to be that they provide food for the whole population of the country, and are, therefore, its mainstay. Agriculture, according to our author, predicates

¹ *Sul.*, 75. Compare this analysis of Man's rise to the citizenship of the State with Ghazzālī's analysis as given in the *Iḥyāu'l-'Ulūm*, III, 6, v; see also chapter 6, below, Ghazzālī, 1058-1111.

² A complete analysis of human marital relations is sketched in *Sul.*, 80 and 81.

³ *Ibid.*, 75.

three important rights of those who are engaged in it, namely that they should be provided with plenty of water, they should be free to carry on their work without let or hindrance and should be taxed lightly according to the scale laid down by the Law. The rest of the population lives in towns or cities, and is thereby assured of a peaceful life, safety of their property and the honour of their womanhood. Moreover by living together their needs are easily satisfied, while they have a chance of increasing their earnings by mutual co-operation. Just as plenty of water and low taxation are the desiderata of the rural population, so a good locality, plenty of air, water and fuel, a city wall and a sense of safety from a possible external foe are all necessary for the upkeep of the urban section of the population, and if any of these conditions were missing, the town or city would be in a great danger of devastation.¹

Scheme of Human Knowledge.—We have now come to the threshold of Politics proper. Our author deals at some length with the division and subdivision of human knowledge covering practically all the sciences and arts that were known in his day, demonstrating his great power of analysis.

¹ *Sul.*, 118. Aristotle fails to make this distinction between the urban and the rural, which is the essential condition of the life in a State, ancient or modern.

He begins by dividing the scope of human wisdom into theoretical knowledge and practical application. He then redivides theoretical knowledge into (i) higher, which has its basis in the brain and deals with purely metaphysical subjects; (ii) middle, centred in memory and dealing with mathematics, literature and linguistics and (iii) lower, relating to the Natural Sciences and based on feeling. It is under the heading of Middle Knowledge that he puts the knowledge of facts and happenings in bye-gone days, of the deeds of kings and their policy and of the States and their evolution, which is connoted by the term, History. When we pass on to the application of theoretical knowledge to practical needs, or actions as opposed to sciences proper, we see that these are subdivided into (i) control over one's self and one's body, (ii) control over the household, (iii) control over other persons. This third division of Actions connotes what we mean by Politics, and this is said to be the need of Man so long as he is alive.¹

It will thus be seen that to our author, History is to knowledge in general what Politics are to

¹ *Sul.*, 61. This is in advance of Ghazzālī who divides all sciences into those connected and those unconnected with religion; Ghazzālī; *Munqidh*, 15. It is rather strange that Pollock divides 'Moral Sciences' under 'Knowledge' and 'Action' much after the fashion of the *Sulūk*; see his *History of the Science of Politics*, I, 4.

application and action, and the former is treated as a necessary complement to the latter, for the great officers of the State, the ruler, ministers, royal chamberlains and judges are all admonished to study History in order that they may know their position, their rights and duties in the light of the action of their predecessors in title in the past.¹

Sovereignty.—Once granted the need for a corporate life and action, one great difficulty is bound to arise, and it would be produced by each individual having his own particular way of doing justice and exercising oppressive behaviour in certain cases according to his own whims and fancies. It is, therefore, the Will of the Divine Providence that Heads of Society should be appointed to see that the Divine Laws for organisation of the people and their unity of action are properly enforced.² In course of time larger political entities are organised and evolved and a number of these headships are united into one large headship, the head of which unites in himself some of the highest human qualities, through the exercise of which he manages to control these

¹ *Sul.*, 105, 126, 129.

² *Ibid.*, 102. Compare, Locke: *Treatises on Civil Government*, II, ch. II, where the pre-statal man is supposed to have the right to punish the transgressors of the Law of Nature.

smaller political entities.¹

It is absolutely necessary that the ruler of a State should be the best among the people and he should be supreme in the land, for, if there are more than one supreme ruler in the land, it is bound to entail constant quarrels between the pseudo-sovereigns, and the whole State would be in a great turmoil.² In order to ensure peace and prosperity in the land, it is, therefore, of the utmost importance that all the citizens should obey the sovereign's orders and be helpers, not antagonists in his effort at natural unity and the organisation of the material resources of the country.³

Our author is not content with saying that the ruler should be the best among the people but he actually recounts thirteen perquisites which should be native to the ideal ruler, and among these are to be found physical and mental superiority, love of knowledge and truth, and the ruler should at the same time be a lover of justice and

¹ *Sul.*, 10. Compare Ibn Khaldūn's theory of a number of group-minds merging into a single group-mind, *Proleg.*, II, 1.

² *Ibid.*, 103. Whatever may be the origin of the modern theory of a mono-sovereign State, there is little doubt that the early Muslim thinkers followed the idea of the Divine Oneness and the Qur'ānic dictum: "Had there been other deities therein besides the one God, then verily both (the heaven and the earth) would have been utterly disordered." (Qur'ān, xxi, 22).

³ *Ibid.*, 104.

hater of tyranny and oppression, while he should consider this life only a passing phase and live for the sole desire of doing good to his people.¹

Naturally such a superior and benevolent sovereign would be different to the autocrats who govern their subjects with the sole desire of making their own lot happy at the expense of their subjects. The work recounts the ways in which the ruler should deal with his subjects, and the first and foremost thing is that he should make the citizens love and not merely fear him, so that obedience to him should be based on natural inclination and with the sincere belief that obedience to the Law is good for them all.² This is only possible if the ruler holds himself aloof from such qualities as greed, pride, vice, unscrupulousness in the fulfilment of his desired laziness, etc., and has the power to face difficulties and hardships, practise forgiveness and do justice at all costs.³

Justice.—This book deals with the principles of justice in all its aspects. Justice is defined as the condition of the correctness of the locus of all actions and is based on the happy means between

¹ *Sul.*, 11. Although our author says that in order to ensure orderly succession, the Headship might be made hereditary, still this is only a secondary consideration, the primary being the qualities necessary to make a good Head.

² *Ibid.*, 107.

³ *Ibid.*, 109.

the thinking faculty and the animal nature in Man. It is a function of government which is on a higher plane than other functions for, says our author, there is a consensus of the opinion of men belonging to entirely different ways of thought about it, and there is not one who doubts the need of its efficacy and integrity.¹ It consists in placing everything in its proper place and giving everyone his due. Justice entails a system of rights which are threefold, *i.e.*, rights due to God, those due to living and those due to the dead. So far as the rights due to the living are concerned, they consist in such duties as returning the amount of debt due, handing back to the owner things put into someone's safe custody, giving correct and proper evidence and doing good deeds.² The ruler is equally bound to do what is just, and justice in his case consists in keeping of promises, being merciful, and giving everyone his

¹ *Sul.*, 116. We should remember that Plato's whole burden of argument in the *Republic* is the foundation of the ideal City on the basis of Justice. See Chance: *Until Philosophers are Kings*, London, 1938. But the course of European History has been towards a minimisation of the importance of Justice owing to the increased importance attached to the continuous quarrels between the ruler and the people till justice began to be influenced by the one or the other. That is why we see on the one side the scene of judges being dictated by Kings, on the other being 'protected' by Parliaments. Ibn Abī'r-Rabī' is fully conscious of the importance of an absolutely impartial and independent judiciary.

² *Ibid.*, 116.

share according to the Laws which have been made for the country under his sway.¹

We all know the qualities which are deemed necessary for a judge in the modern world, but we also know fully well that in spite of the very salutary premonitions our judges sometimes lack the integrity and freedom from outside pressure which ought to be their chief merit, and we are forced to surmise that there is something lacking in the standard set for the appointment of our judges that they should go so astray. We might compare this standard with that set by our author more than a thousand years ago, and one feels on reading what he has to say that if the standard of justice in force during the early Abbasid period was even half of that set down in the *Sulūk*, it must have been of a very high order indeed. Our author says that—

(1) a Judge should be God-fearing and at the same time should have a dignified demeanour;

(2) he should have sound common-sense and be conversant with the best of judicial literature;

(3) he should bear an absolutely irreproachable character ;

¹ *Sulūk*, 117. It is clear from a number of passages in the book that the author has in his mind a system whereby the ruler does not possess the power to frame the laws but where the laws reach him ready-made. He is therefore not an autocrat in the present sense but his powers are limited by those superimposed laws.

(4) he should not deliver judgments before he is satisfied that full proof has been laid before him, nor tarry in his judgment when sufficient evidence has been produced ;

(5) he should be fearless in awarding what is right and due ;

(6) he should not accept any presents nor hear any recommendations ;

(7) he should never see any party in private ;

(8) he should rarely smile, and speak little ;

(9) he should never ask any party to do him any favour ; and

(10) he should take great care to protect the property of the orphans.¹

Revolutions.—So much for the perquisites of an efficient and lasting administration. But of course government is an institution run by human beings and as such is liable to inefficiency and decay, leading to revolutions. The book deals with this aspect of the case and analyses the causes of internal turmoil as well as the conditions of a return to peace. He says that sedition is committed when a man turns his back on the principles which formed the basis of his loyalty to the ruler,² and this is regarded as a perversion of the thinking faculty of Man.³ He quotes the

¹ *Sul.*, 130.

² *Ibid.*, 35.

³ *Ibid.*, 33. When we remember that the ruler is the best available

supposed reply of a philosopher to the question put to him by a Persian King, why internal disorders took place and how they are to be ended. The philosopher said that the causes of internal turmoil were five, namely: (i) Carelessness of those who had power coupled with the realisation of powerlessness by those who had not got it. (ii) Sheer love of disturbance on the part of some subjects. (iii) Love of power on the part of the ambitious. (iv) Courage of those who considered themselves deserving of honour. (v) Expression by word of mouth of what is hidden in the recesses of the heart. The condition under which this condition of revolt ends are: (i) When the possessor of power subdues him who would wrest power from him. (ii) When rebels give up rebellion for some reason or other. (iii) When the ruler becomes fearless and begins to disdain those at the bottom of the rebellion. (iv) When the prestige of the revolutionaries begins to wane. (v) When the ruler manages to inculcate fear in the minds of the enemy.¹

Wealth and Empire.—As is well known most

in the land as our author envisages him, we might ourselves come to the same conclusion.

¹ *Sul.*, 177. Aristotle's analysis of the causes, course and suppression of Revolutions is far more detailed and explicit, while our author is very general in his treatment. This itself shows that he was independent in his judgment. See *Aris. : Pol.*, ii, v, vi, etc.

revolutions are caused by economic upheavals, and we now pass to the question of wealth. The book before us rightly distinguishes between the reasons why Man needs wealth and the need for sound State finances, and this is in consonance with his whole outlook viewing the ruler only as a servant of the State. He says that the reason why an individual wishes to acquire wealth for himself is the wish for power to take peaceful possession of animal and vegetable products in order to make himself comfortable in life. He wants to possess animals both for his safety and his food, as well as for providing himself with their skins as defence against atmospheric extremes, while vegetable produce is needed for his food, clothing and for the manufacture of finished articles.¹ He scores a right and a very modern point when he says that it is in the field for the acquisition of these products for the individual that a ruler tries to extend the sway of his State and found Empires.² But we must remember that the need for State wealth is quite distinct from the need for individual wealth, for money is needed by the ruler not to fulfil his personal greed, but rather to keep the frontiers secure against a possible enemy, to uproot evil and increase the power of the lowly and the

¹ *Sul.*, 74.² *Ibid.*, 75.

down-trodden, to free those imprisoned for non-payment of debts, and so organise government that everything should be done to better the condition of the people.¹ He gives some very salutary principles concerning the budget and visually demonstrates that the only proper budget is that under which income exceeds expenditure.²

Slavery.—The last thing we would mention here is the discussion of the question of slavery. Our author says that slavery is either natural or artificial, and reminds us in rather a taunting way that there is a third kind of slavery, that of one's desires. As regards natural slaves, they are men strong of physique but weak in intellect. The slaves of other kind are those who are bound to be in that station in life according to Law either for household purposes, for further acquisition of wealth, or else for other duties.³ As regards the way in which slaves should be treated, our author follows the explicit precepts of the Apostle of Islam and says that the owner should take care that he gives them sufficient leisure during the week, should deal with them kindly and should treat them as carefully as he would the limbs of his own body.⁴ One need hardly mention that

¹ *Sul.*, 133.

² *Ibid.*, 119.

³ *Ibid.*, 83, 84.

⁴ With Aristotle, 'the relation between the master and the slave does not exclude kindness' (*Pol.*, vi, o), while our author says that

slaves were in those days what servants are in ours, and were as necessary for the household, progress in arts and crafts and other walks of life as hired labour nowadays. While social reformers at present are always making proposals for the betterment of the social condition of the workers, Islam by one stroke set the noble standard of equality between the condition of the lives of the slaves and their masters, and Abī'r-Rabī' simply reflects the injunction and likens the slaves to the very limbs of the master.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS¹

On a perusal of the political ideas couched in Ibn Abī'r-Rabī's work, one feels the extremely ethical atmosphere prevalent in his political principles. Although there is little of pure religion pervading his politics, there is no doubt that he is a great believer in providing an ethical basis for the ruler, his ministers and his judges. He stands midway between the purely Greek thought with its annihilation of the individual in the State, a thought which has reached us through

kindness is the *sine qua non* of this relationship.

¹ We have dealt with only the most important ideas sketched in the work before us, as the compass of the chapter did not allow the discussion of such topics as statecraft, ministers, classes of State subjects and their mutual relations and a host of other matters.

Hegel in the extreme form of German Nazism, and the purely individualist theory under which the State is only the handmaid of the individual. No doubt Kingship is accepted without demur, and there is no place for the Republic in the *Sulūk*; still, as has been mentioned, the King is not necessarily an hereditary despot, but the best among the people, coming very near the Platonic ideal, but not so near as to be made a practical impossibility. His rule, again, is not to be an irresponsible unmitigated despotism, but is to be limited by two principles—a system of Law which would be above him, and the practical idealism of his own personality.

One thing is most noticeable in the work before us, and it is that there is not one word which might be taken to mean the slightest religious or racial prejudice or the exclusion of any sect from any office of State. We have before us a whole vista of religious persecution in Europe coming right up to our very day, and perhaps extending to the unknown future, and here is a political scientist writing a book in the ninth century A.C. containing admonitions to the King under his express orders, tacitly telling him that the good of the State lies in a sense of equality between the races and religions of the Empire. This was, of course, entirely in

accordance with the principles of government actually in vogue in the Caliphate of his own day.

Lastly, as to his method, Ibn Abī'r-Rabī' does not take his stand on history at all, and apart from giving the solitary instance of Moses appointing his brother Aaron his wazīr and arguing thereby the so-called appointment of 'Alī to his wazirate by the Apostle of Islam, there is not a single argument based on any past happening. As has been mentioned before, history and politics are made mutually complementary and high officers of State advised to study history; yet the author himself ignores history and rather takes his stand on what is inherently good and ethically correct, making morality the great bed-rock of a successful life and a successful statehood.

Chapter 4

FĀRĀBĪ (870-950)

Fārābī's Education.—Abū Naṣr Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Tarkhān al-Fārābī, one of the greatest philosophers that the Muslim world has produced, was a Turk by birth and was born at Wāsiḡ in Fārāb, a district of Transoxania. When he arrived at Baghdād for the first time he was still in his teens and it is said that he was not conversant with the Arabic language. After gaining enough proficiency in that language he became the pupil of the Christian savant, Abū Bishr Matta b. Yūnus,¹ well known as translator of a number of works by Aristotle and other Greek writers from Syriac (in which they had already been rendered) into Arabic, and as the commentator on Aristotle's *Categories* and *Prophry's Isagoge*. Not satisfied with what he had learnt with him, he went to another Christian philosopher, Yuḥannā b. Jilād² at Ḥarrān from whom he acquired further instructions in philoso-

¹ Died 328-939.

² Or 'Khaitan'; see Qifti, *Tarikhul-Hukamā*, Leipzig, 1903, p. 277.

phical science.¹

Political Conditions.—Those were the days of great turmoil in the Islamic realm. Fārābī was born in 257/870 in the reign of al-Mu'tamid,² dying in 339/950 in the reign of al-Muṭī',³ and was thus a contemporary of two great ṣūfis, Abū Bakr esh-Shiblī and Maṣṣūr el-Ḥallāj, as also of one of the greatest poets of Arabic, one who, in the pride of his poetic art was foolish enough even to lay claim to prophethood (a claim which he later discarded), the poet al-Mutenebbī.⁴ The Islamic State was rent asunder by a number of causes, religious, racial, philosophic and cultural, and new dynasties were springing up within the Abbasid realm which were destined to weaken the Caliphate to such a degree as to make the Caliph a puppet in the hands of any adventurer who might seize his person. These dynasties were mostly Persian or Turkish and differed from the Abbasids in their racial as well as sometimes in their religious tenets, for most of the scions of the new houses belonged to the Shi'ah while the Caliph was the centre of orthodox

¹ Authorities for Fārābī, Qiftī and Ibn Khallikān. There are references to his political thought in Carra de Vaux, *Avicenne*, and in such works as *Encyclopædia of Islam*, but to my knowledge no one has so far attempted an elucidation of his political philosophy in any detail.

² 334/946-363/974.

³ 247/861-334/945.

⁴ 303/915-393/950.

Sunnism. It was during Fārābī's lifetime that the last Apostolic Imām, Muḥammad al-Mahdī, aged 13, had disappeared while looking for his father Ḥasan al-'Askarī;¹ this event must have created a deep impression on the upholders of the hereditary Imāmate, and it is no wonder that the Shī'ah Buwaihīd, Mu'izzud-Dowlah, took the opportunity of his triumphal entry into Baghdād in 341/952 to declare the 10th of Muharrum each year to be a day of mourning in memory of the tragedy of Karbalā.²

This order was promulgated a couple of years after Fārābī's death, but another house had been in control of affairs at Baghdād long before. The members of this house, named Ḥamdānīd after its progenitor, were different from their successors, the Buwaihīds, in that they were at least half Arab and hailed from Moṣal. The Ḥamdānīds, specially Ḥusain b. Ḥamdān and his brother Abu'l-Haijā' Abdu'l-lāh b. Ḥamdān, played the king-maker in the time of the Caliphs al-Muqtadir,³ el-Qahir⁴ ar-Rāḍī⁵ and al-Muttaqī⁶ whom they helped to set up, depose, reinstate and redepose as they liked. Of the Ḥamdānīds we are mostly interested in 'Alī, one of the three

¹ 265/878.² Ameer Ali, *A Short History of the Saracens*, p. 303.³ 295/907-320/932.⁴ 310/932-322/934.⁵ 322/934-329/940⁶ 329/940-333/944.

sons of Abu'l-Haijā', who proved to be one of the greatest patrons of learning of his day. 'Alī had led a successful expedition against the Greeks in 936 when he was but twenty-one years of age, and it was he who tried to save the Caliph al-Muttaqī from the clutches of the Barīdis,¹ taking him to his own capital, Moṣal. Muttaqī was so pleased with 'Alī's conduct that he conferred on him the title of Saif'ud-Dowlah, and it is as Saif'ud-Dowlah that he is known to all students of the history of the Abbasid Caliphate.

Saif'ud-Dowlah's Court.—Saif held a brilliant court first at Moṣal and then at Aleppo, where he had to move in 333/944 the year before the Buwaihid² occupation of Baghdād. This court was thronged by philosophers, savants, poets and litterateurs much in the same way as the court of Lorenzo the Magnificent was at Florence in the fifteenth century. It has already been mentioned that the Abbasid Caliphs of this period were regarded as centres of orthodoxy, and it is no wonder that there was no place at Baghdād for all that seemed new or outlandish in the tenets

¹ Barīdis, so called because they were descended from a post master. They played an important part in the time of al-Muqtadir. One of them, Abū 'Abd'i-lāh, was appointed wazīr by Amūru'l-Umarā, Bejkem, the Turk.

² The Buwaihids or Būyids were descended from Abū Shuja' Buwaih of Dailam, and attained great eminence during the period with which we are concerned.

current there. Those were the days of religious unrest and the Ḥanbalite¹ doctrine which leant towards the puritanism of the type of early Islam, was increasing its influence. On the other hand, Greek works were being translated into Syriac and Arabic, and the century was the "golden period of Arabic translations."² The work had really begun in the reign of Māmūn³ in 217/832, when he founded the Academy of Baitu'l-Ḥikmat, and from that date onwards myriads of books had been translated from Greek into Syriac and Arabic. These works could not but have a direct influence on Muslim thought, and it was natural that those in the ascendant in the centre of the Caliphate should look askance at precepts which they considered to be if not wholly, at least in part, antagonistic to the principles on which Islam was supposed to stand.⁴ The scions of the new dynasties, however, had no such scruples, and it is remarkable what a large patronage was given to science and philosophy, literature and art by men like Saif'ud-Dowlah, who created an

¹ Ḥanbalites, followers of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, the fourth Orthodox Imām, 164/780-240/855.

² O'Leary, *Arabic Thought*, ch. IV.

³ 198/813-288/833.

⁴ It is remarkable that in spite of the seeming influence of what was regarded as anti-Islamic thought by a section of the Muslims, there was the most complete toleration of non-Muslim religions, and the Jews, Christians and Zoroastrians were free to worship as they liked.

atmosphere of great toleration in their respective centres. While Shiblī¹ was being persecuted and Manṣūr el-Ḥallāj² done to death, Saif'ud-Dowlah nurtured at his court persons of the mettle of Fārābī and Mutenebbi, one a prince among poets and the other the doyen of Muslim philosophers. It was with the feelings of real praise, not of vain flattery, that Mutenebbi sings of his patron:—

و بمهجتي يا عاذلي الملك الذي
استخبطت كل الناس في ارجائه
الشمس من حساده والقمر هن
قرنائه والسيف من اسمائه
اين الثلاثه من ثلاث خلاله
من حسنه و ابائه و مضائه³

Administration.—Here it is well to say a few words about the administration of the State in

¹ 247/861-334/945.

² 244/858-301/913.

³ Mutenebbi, *Diwān*, Qasidah I.

"O thou who tauntest me, thou shouldst understand that I am willing to sacrifice my very life for the king whom I have tried to please in the face of all others ;

"Sun envies him, Success accompanies him, and Sword is a part of his very name ;

"But there is no comparison between these three and his great qualities namely his Resplendence, his sense of Honour, his Alacrity."

which Fārābī flourished, so that we might be able to gauge what difference there was between the actual condition of affairs and the ideal which he propounded. The division of the *Dīwānu'l-'Azīz* into various *dīwāns* or offices would be described elsewhere,¹ and here it will suffice to mention the transition of this form of administration to the authority of the Amīrs and Sultāns who were just beginning to appear side by side with the Caliphs. *Baghdād* had, during the years now being scanned, some truly great ministers like *Ibnu'l-Furāt*, 'Alī b. 'Īsa² and others, but they could not withstand the onslaught of new forces which were then making themselves felt. It was in the time of ar-Rāḍī that ar-Rāiq was made Amīr, and later the Turk Bejkem was created Amīru'l-Umarā, a title which was henceforward granted to almost every one who got the upper-hand at *Baghdād* and thus denoted the actual political power in the capital. It thus entirely eclipsed the *Wazīrate* which had been connotation of the chief executive office of the Caliphate almost from the beginning of Abbasid administration. From now onwards, the *wazīr* had to bow down to the will of the Amīr who happened

¹ See ch. V below.

² See the fine work, Bowen, 'Alī b. 'Īsa, *the Good Wazīr*, Cambridge, 1928.

to be the actual custodian of the Caliph. It was in this sense that 'Alī the grandson of Ḥamdān was created Amīr Saif'ud-Dowlah by al-Muttaqī in 942. The first to adopt the title of Sulṭān was Aḥmad b. Buwaih ; he was also created Mu'izzud-Dowlah, and his name with that of his brother 'Alī-Imādu'd-Dowlah was inscribed on the coins of the realm long with that of the Caliph al-Muti'.¹ Yet another title appears, *i.e.*, that of Malik or King, and the same Mu'izzud-Dowlah liked to be addressed as a Malik, although the first to receive it actually at the hands of the Caliph was Nūru'd-dīn Zangī, son of his more famous father 'Imādu'd-dīn Zangī, who was created al-Maliku'l-'Adil or 'the Just King' by the Caliph al-Muktafi.² But that was much later than the period we are describing, though even now the office of the Caliph was becoming more and more like that of Medieval Popes with little political authority than that which a powerful Sulṭān, Amīr or self-styled Malik might leave to his credit. The Caliph became a pawn on the chessboard of politics, highly respected and revered as one with the mantle of the Apostle of Islam on his shoulders, but fit only to be passed from hand to hand and to be placed on the boards

¹ Photo of the coin in *Bowen*, opp. p. 393.

² 530/1135-555/1160.

much as his actual guardian liked.

Fārābī's Versatility.—Such was the general condition of the Abbasid Caliphate during Fārābī's lifetime. The versatility of Fārābī knew no bounds, for he found time to study philosophy, logic, politics, mathematics and physics, and not only wrote books on music but actually composed musical pieces. Among numerous works which he has left behind him he has to his credit commentaries on practically the whole of the Organon, works on Logic, a summary of Plato's Nomoi or the Laws, commentary on Aristotle's Nicomæchæan Ethics, books on Natural Sciences such as commentaries on Aristotle's Physics, Meteorology, the Sky and the World, as well an independent work on the Movement of Heavenly Bodies. He wrote besides, a number of books on psychology and metaphysics, and in mathematics commented on some of Euclid's problems as well as on the famous Almagest of Ptolemy, apart from treatises on Plato and Aristotle.¹ A man with such learning had no place in the ninth century Baghdād, and as we have pointed out, we find him regularly attached to Saif'ud-Dowlah's court. In 334/946 Saif took Damascus and Fārābī became a permanent resident of that delightful place, spending his time in the gardens of the

¹ For a complete list see O'Leary, *Arabic Thought*, ch. IV.

erstwhile Umayyad capital, discussing philosophical questions with his friends and writing down his own opinions and compositions sometimes in a regular form, sometimes on merely loose leaves. It is said that he was so indifferent to worldly matters that he never tried to obtain any sumptuous livelihood and was content with the four dirhems which the Amīr paid him as his daily honorarium. He died in 339/950 at the ripe age of nearly eighty years.

Fārābī's Position in the World of Learning.—In pure philosophy Fārābī became as famous as any philosopher of Islam, and it is said that a *savant* of the calibre of Avicenna found himself entirely incapable of understanding the true bearing of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* until one day he casually purchased one of Fārābī's works, and by their help he was able to grasp their purport. Thus it may well be asserted that Fārābī was in the truest sense "the parent of all subsequent Arabic Philosophers,"¹ so that it is only natural that he is regarded by the Muslims as the *Mu'allimu'ṣ-Ṣānī* the Second Preceptor, the First Preceptor being Aristotle himself. We are here less concerned with general philosophical and logical principles propounded by the Master than with his political philosophy. It is to be noted here

¹ O Leary, p. 171.

that the Arab world then was not cognisant of Aristotle's work of *Politics* while the other political work ascribed to him, namely the *Constitution of Athens*, has been unearthed in our own time, and the only Greek material on politics on Arabic available in his days consisted of Plato's Republic and Laws. It may be granted that he drew on the Arabic version of 'Republic' and was so much conversant with the Laws that he actually prepared a summary of that important work, but there is no doubt that he was himself solely responsible for all other political material found in his political treatises, and it was the result of his own considered thought, not a mere copy of the Platonic ideal depicted in the Republic and modified in the Laws. It is necessary to bear this in mind for the reason that most of what has been written on Fārābī has been from the point of view of pure philosophy, and there is no doubt that he had to draw on neo-Platonic ideas current in the Arab world of those days in his commentaries on Aristotle, Porphyry and Ptolemy, although even in the realm of pure philosophy there is much that is original, a fact which is amply proved by his original works on Plato, Aristotle and Galen. We might accept the proposition that he was inspired by Plato¹

¹ *Encyclopædia of Islam*, art. Fārābī.

in his setting up of the *Ideal City*, but as there is a mass of new material in his political writings not found in Plato and taken from local sources, it is a matter of importance that such material should be analysed and Fārābī be given his rightful place on the scene of political philosophy.

His Political Works.—The list of Fārābī's works which has come down to us contains five on politics, viz., *A Summary of Plato's 'Laws'*, *Syāsatu'l-Madanīyah*, *Ārāu ahli'l-Madīnati'l-Fāḍilāh*, *Jawāmi'u's-Siyāsat* and *Ijtima'a-tu'l-Madanīyah*. It is the *Siyāsat* and the *Ārā* which form the most important political contribution of the Master, so much so that Qiftī says in his *Tārīkhu'l Hukamā* that these two works "have no equal."¹ Of these it is interesting to note that the *Madinatu'l-Fāḍilah*, the *Model City*, was written in 330-331/941-942 a few years before Fārābī's death when he was living the life of a recluse at Damascus, enjoying Saifu'd-Dowlah patronage, and thus may be said to be the result of his mature thought at time when he had torn himself away from the turmoil of the world around him.

Of the two treatises the *Siyāsat* consists of the enunciation of practically the whole of the exposition of the political theory which Fārābī

¹ Qiftī, p. 278.

wishes to propound. It starts with the differentia between men and animals dealing with the need for collective action, the contentious nature of man and its effects, the need for the existence of the Model City or State and the ideal Head of the State,¹ and goes on to other forms of the State among the Ancients and in the Days of Ignorance,² such as tyrannies, autocracies, republics, etc. The other works, *Ārā*, as its full title shows, concentrates more on the Model State. Besides covering more or less the same ground from another and more particularised viewpoint, it deals with such aspects of political question as Sovereignty, forms opposed to the Model State, theories of Communism and Individualism, touching on what came to be called the Patriarchal theory and describing in a certain amount of detail what might be named the Theory of Mutual Renunciation of Rights. Thus it will be seen that, although the two treatises are not very large, they contain quite a lot of material for deep thought and show us the drift of Islamic Political ideas in the middle of the tenth century A.C.

¹ Fārābī, following Greek writers, makes the *City* identical with the *State*, while his *nation* (*أمة*) means an aggregate of States politically distinct but culturally similar.

² 'Days of Ignorance' is a technical term denoting the period of Arab history before the advent of Islam.

Human Intellect and Powers.—We will take both treatises together and try to analyse them so far as political philosophy is concerned.¹ After enumerating the underlying principles of all bodies, etherial and physical, Fārābī goes on to say that the differentia between man and other terrestrial animals is what he calls عقل الفعّال the Agent Intellect, which is really an emanation from the First Cause and which raises man to the highest heights. It is this Agent Intellect which inspires man's intelligence to be aroused to activity which Fārābī names عقل المستفاد or Gained Intellect. The Agent Intellect is likened to the sun which gives light to the eyes and without which the power of sight is only latent, while with the help of the sun's rays it becomes patent.²

Man's Powers can be analysed into power of Reason قوة الناطقه, power of Thinking, power of Feeling and finally, power of Contention قوة النزوعيه. It is the power of Reason through which he conquers knowledge and differentiates between good and bad in morality and in actions, between

¹ The text of the *Ārāu ahli'l-Madīnati'l-fāḍillah*, referred to in this chapter as *Arā*, has been edited by Detrici and printed by Brill in 1895. The edition used by me is that of the Nil Press, Cairo. The *Siyāsatu'l-Madaniyah*, referred to as *Siyas*, has been published by the Dāiratu'l-Ma'arif, Hyderabad Deccan, 1346 H.

² *Siyas*, 6. This division is found in al-Kindī as well. For an exposition, see O'Leary, p. 148.

profit and loss, while the power of Contention makes him want something or get away from something else, and is the basis of love and hate, truth and untruth, anger and mental rest. The power of thinking necessitates another power to retain traces of feeling after the thing felt has passed away, while this again resolves into the well-known Five Senses. It is to be noticed, says Fārābī, that the last three powers are found in man as well in animals while the powers of Reason and Contention are peculiar to mankind.¹

Human Groupings.—From the very nature of his needs as well as for the sake of amenities of life and for attaining the highest possible degree of progress, it is incumbent on men to gather in large groups. And this is not peculiar to any particular set of men but is the case of all men alike.² There are many kinds of human groupings, but they can all be divided into the Perfect and the Imperfect. The imperfect groupings are those of the village, of the wards of city, and collection on the roads and the halting place. All these are really in the service of the city,³ which is largest of all these and is at the same time the smallest perfect grouping of men. After

¹ *Siyas*, 4, 5.

² *Ibid.*, 37; *Ārā*, 77. Ghazzālī has developed this idea to a fuller extent in his *Iḥyā*, III, 6, v. This is described in ch. VI of this work.

³ *Ārā*, 78.

the city comes the middle grouping, that of the Nationality or *أمة* which is resident in one particular part of the earth, evidently without any political cohesion, while the largest human grouping is, of course, mankind inhabiting the terrestrial globe. All these imperfect and perfect groupings are really connected with one another, for the halting place is a part of the road, the road a part of the ward, the ward a part of the city, the city a part of the nationality, the nationality a part of mankind.

Natural and Artificial Barriers to Human Unity.—Although Fārābī demonstrates in a remarkable manner the essential unity of man, he is careful to describe the reasons why one nation differs from another naturally and what kinds of artificial barriers have been set up between them.¹ The natural differences between nations arise in their relation to the celestial bodies, or, as we should say, owing to geographical factors resulting from the relation of the particular part of the earth to heavenly bodies, causing heat, cold and vapoury substances to change the climatic conditions of the place.² This reacts on the habits and customs of the people causing a bar to appear between one nation and another nation. The artificial barriers consist mainly in differences in

¹ *Ārā*, 77.

² *Ārā*, 41.

language which make mutual communication difficult as between one nation and another.

Thus, in spite of obvious need for co-operation, mankind is divided into numerous groups, Fārābī says that the greatest good and the highest culmination is attained in the unit of perfect assemblages, i.e., the City or State,¹ and it is on this that he concentrates his attention.

Theory of Manual Renunciation of Rights.—It is remarkable how Fārābī anticipates Hobbes by many centuries and lays down the principle under which men tacitly enter into what might be called a Compact for Mutual Renunciation of Rights. The need for instance on fair dealing and justice is necessary because some men are cruel, overbearing or clever, while others are naturally weak either mentally or physically. When men first realise that society cannot be maintained by such discrepancies in their condition, "they gather together, consider the state of affairs, and each of them gives up in favour of the other part of that by which he overpowered him, each making it a condition that they would keep perfect peace with each other and not take away from the other anything except on certain condi-

¹The word used is مدينه but from all that Fārābī has written we must conclude that what he means is the smallest political integration, i.e., the State, whether large or small.

tions.”¹ Thus it is the Contract for Mutual Renunciation of Rights which is at the bottom of all peaceful occupations and incidents of Statehood, and if it comes to pass that in spite of this tacit compact a citizen tries to press down a section of the population, all the others join hands, and by mutual help retain their liberty.²

It will be seen that this Compact is a great improvement on what was to be enunciated in Europe by Hobbes and others of his ken, for, instead of artificially making it the basis of the State, Fārābī makes it the basis of all transactions in the State and presupposes human groupings. He thus really takes off most of the wind from the sails of those who might not agree with the principle of the artificiality of the State. And then, instead of an artificial and a purely autocratic sovereign as the result of the utter helplessness of the people, as Hobbes would have us to believe, he makes the people realise their strength earlier, makes them unite and put an end to any of them who was out to enslave them by underhand methods.

Sovereignty.—We now come to the question of the Ruler, or as later European political scientists would call him, the Sovereign. No doubt Plato

¹ *Ārā*, p. 13. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Part II, ch. XVII.

² *Ibid.*, 113.

had developed the matter of the government of his ideal city in his *Republic* and *Laws*. He had made the All-knowing and All-powerful philosopher Sovereign in the former, who should have no other interest but those of the State;¹ but when he felt that such a philosopher was not available he replaced him in the *Laws* by a board of Phylakes or Guardians and proposed to give them the education which would make them wise governors of the State.² Fārābī starts from the nature of the workers of leadership and impresses his readers that what is wanted for the office is the power of making proper deductions. "There are some who have the intellect to draw conclusion more than others, while some can convey their deductions to others with greater facility." Now this power of deductions is at the bottom of all leadership. Those who can draw conclusions from given facts lead those who cannot, while such as have not the capacity to convey to others what they have themselves learnt have not got the true marks of leadership. It is not necessary that a leader should lead the whole people in every branch of life but only such persons as have a lesser capacity to deduce and

¹ Plato, *Republic*, 414-B. For an enunciation of Plato's views on the Philosopher King, see Nettleship's *Lectures on Plato's Republic*, I.

² Chance, *Until Philosophers are Kings*, ch. IV.

convey their deductions in the branch in which he excels them. In the same way there can be a first leader and a second leader in the same branch, for the first leader would lead the second who is his inferior in the power of deduction while the second would lead his own intellectual inferiors.¹

And now comes the question of Raīsu'l-awwal (the Foremost Leader or the Sovereign of the State). This Raīs should be one, who by his very nature and bringing up, does not want to be instructed by others² and who has the inherent capacity for observation and of conveying his sense to others. Here Fārābī anticipates the doctrine of Sovereignty which was, for the first time detailed in Europe by Bodin in the seventeenth century A.C.,³ but the former's Sovereign is more logical, perhaps more autocratic, than that of the latter, and comes very near John Austin's Sovereign.⁴ Fārābī says that there is no human

¹ *Siyas*, 45, 47.

² *Ārā*, 48-ff.

³ 1530-1596. Bodin qualifies his theory of Sovereignty by supposing certain fundamental laws which cannot be changed even by the Sovereign. To the modern man it is more a question of policy than of power whether the Sovereign changes them or not.

⁴ Fārābī comes remarkably near Austin (1790-1859) who says that a determinate human superior, not in the habit of obedience to a like superior is sovereign in that society. What a small difference is left between this conception and that of Fārābī who wrote a thousand years before Austin!

superior over the head of the Foremost Leader, for if there is one then that one would be the Foremost Leader and this would sink the position of the Second Leader.

If the Foremost Leader be the Model Head of the Model State, he should be able to control the actions of all in the State, and should be the possessor of the Latent Intellect *عقل المنفعل* as well as the Gained Intellect, and these two, aroused to activity by the Agent Intellect would make Fārābī's ideal Sovereign. He says that the Ancients, i.e., the Greeks, put the ideal so high that no ordinary human being would be found to fulfil it, and the honour would be reserved for those who are the chosen of God the Almighty.¹ Instead of being dogmatic after the Platonic fashion, he enumerates twelve attributes of an ideal Sovereign, but himself says that if this ideal is ever attained, its possessor would become the proud ruler of the habitable globe.² The following are the twelve attributes of Fārābī's Sovereign: (1) perfection in physical organs; (2) great understanding; (3) visualisation of all that is said; (4) a perfectly retentive memory; (5) power to get at the root of things with the least argument; (6) power to convey to others exactly according to his wish a deep love of learning;

¹ *Siyas*, 49.

² *Ārā*, 86.

(7) shunning of playfulness; (8) a lack of desire, excess in eating, drinking and sexual intercourse; (9) love of truth and hatred of lying; (10) breadth of heart and love of justice and hatred of force and tyranny; (11) power to distribute justice without any effort, fearlessness in doing things as he thinks ought to be done; and (12) possession of enough wealth.¹ Fārābī knows well that these fine qualities cannot be found in one single human being,² so he says that one with just five or six of these qualities would make a fairly good leader. If, however, even five or six of them are not found in a person, he would have one who has been brought under a Leader with these qualities, and would thus seem to prefer some kind of hereditary leadership, with the important condition that the heir should follow in the footsteps of his worthy predecessor. In case even such a person is not available, it is preferable to have a council of two or even five members possessing an aggregate of these qualities provided at least one of them is a ḥakīm, i.e., one who is able to know the wants of the people and visualise the needs of the State as a whole.³ This ḥakīm is to

¹ *Ārā*, 88. See Plato, *Republic*, 485-487, analysed in *Nettleship op. cit.*, p. 199.

² *Ibid.*

³ Here Fārābī comes very near the Platonic philosopher-king. However there is a visible difference between the Platonic personification of reason which Plato himself negatives in his *Laws* and the

Fārābī a desideratum of every kind of government, and if such a one is not procurable then the State is bound to be shattered to atoms.

Fārābī no doubt indulges in a certain amount of idealism. But he must be credited with the knowledge of the impossibility of attaining the ideal set forth in the form of the twelve attributes and to find means of getting over practical difficulties. These means are firstly, a council of efficient men, efficient in certain definite traits of character which, to Fārābī, go to form the minimum desideratum for the smooth working of the State, the supervision of a Chief with the right amount of knowledge and feeling for the welfare of the people, and lastly, respect for the basic laws and traditions of the State. His solution is more practical than that of Plato, for example, for when Plato becomes hopeless of finding his 'philosopher-king' he only substitutes him for a number of Phylakes or Guardians, each of them perhaps excelling the others in attributes which were not found in one.¹ Moreover Fārābī takes care to make his substitute Leaders respect and conform to the laws laid down by the great

Fārābīan 'ḥakīm'. See *Chance*, p. 135.

¹ These 'guardians' would be above the Law while the Fārābīan councillors should have to take their cue from the laws already laid down. *Chance*, p. 135.

Leaders in days gone by.

Here Fārābī's theory of Sovereignty has been given in a certain amount of detail here, for one thing as it contrasts very favourably with the state of affairs in the Caliphate of his own day. As has been stated earlier, the Caliph had become a mere puppet in the hands of his own capable wazīrs, and later on all real political authority had passed into the hands of Turkish or Persian nobles who had come to control the affairs from the Oxus and the Indus to the extreme limits of the Caliphate. What Fārābī does is to analyse the causes of weakness in the body politic and to enunciate the attributes of the ideal Sovereign, thus bringing into prominent relief the contrast between the ideal and the actual before him. Besides the lack of intellectual toleration, then the order of the day at Baghdād, one of the reasons why he must have migrated to Saifu'd-Dowlah's court, must have been that in this Amīr he saw a person coming nearer to the idea than the puppet who bore the mantle of the Apostle of Islam, but who lacked practically all that went to make even a decent substitute for the ideal.

Internal Organisation of the State.—Fārābī is not satisfied with the appointment of the best man or of a committee of best men as available for the helm of the State, but considers the internal

organisations well. He says that the dignities of the citizens in State services depend on their nature as well on their bringing up, and the Supreme Head should organise men in each larger service group according to their worth in the matter of service. It is only when the Supreme Head gives everyone the position he merits, that the State is said to be properly organised. The Supreme Head ought to feel more or less as the likeness of the First Cause, *i.e.*, God the Almighty,¹ and take lesson from His work in that He has put everyone and everything in the place best fitted, otherwise the work of the Creation would not run as smoothly as it does.²

It has been said that the Supreme Head, from his very nature, does not take orders from any human superior, but as you go down the ladder of superiority, this state of affairs changes, and except the Supreme Head each man becomes master and servant at the same time, taking orders from one superior in rank and authority and giving orders to one inferior, till the lowest rung of the ladder is attained.³

¹ *Siyas*, 54.

² Plato says that 'good life consists in a progressive assimilation to God as far as possible.' *Chance*, p. 136.

³ The analogy is found in Aristotle, *Politics*, 1, 5, 8, 9; but there Aristotle uses it to establish the institution of slavery; Fārābī on the other hand, wants to ensure the proper government of the State in spite of the diversity of its component parts. See *Chance*, p. 179.

Here Fārābī likens the whole structure of government to the human body and says that as in human body the chief organ, *i.e.*, the heart, should be the most perfect, so the Raīs or Head of the State should be as humanly perfect as possible. It is the heart which signifies the stations of the various organs of the body, and it is through it that the different organs know which other organs should serve them, and which in their turn they have to serve; in the same way the Heart of the State, *i.e.*, the Supreme Head should determine the status of various rungs of society, in a word, the rights of the different classes which go to form the community. The body consists of organs the importance of which is decreased as they recede from the heart till finally we come to lowest bowel and the bladder which are served by no other organ and which stand hardly any comparison with the pivot of the whole body, the heart. In exactly the same manner, says Fārābī, in a well-organised Commonwealth the Supreme Head collects, arranges and organises the different functionaries in a proper manner, and their status increases or decreases according to the distance between them and the Supreme Head.¹

We know that biological analogies have their strong as well as weak points, and while they serve

¹ For further similes see *Ārā*, p. 79.

the purpose of explaining political problems in a facile manner, they are apt to overshoot the mark by representing political institutions as being as mechanical as the organs of the human body. Herbert Spencer has been rightly criticised for not only *comparing* the body politic with the body physical but also of making political capital of the analogy.¹ Fārābī, and after him Ghazzālī, use biological similes, Ghazzālī for finding an ethical basis of the State,² and Fārābī for simply showing the essential unity of the Commonwealth in spite of the obvious diversity of its component parts.³

Communism and Individualism.—Although Fārābī has the translation of Plato's *Republic* by his elbow and says that the citizens of the Model City have things in common among them, he does not fall into the Platonic abyss of making everything—even women—the common property of male citizens. As a matter of fact it is quite clear that apart from the common property to which everyone would have equal right, each man, and each class, would also be allowed individual property apart from the opportunity of acquiring individual knowledge and scope for individual action.⁴ More-

¹ Spencer, *Principles of Sociology*, part 2.

² See ch. VII.

³ *Ārā*, p. 78-ff.

⁴ *Ārā*, 93. How different is this 'communism' from the Platonic ideal where public men should not own houses, land or money at all. See *Rep.*, 421c-422a; *Nettleship*, 136.

over he is shrewd enough to know the essence of individualistic theory and recognises that there are people who think that man is a natural hater of his own kind and that what unity there might be between man and man, is through sheer necessity. Such a theory discards communism as against the very nature of man, and considers the sense of unity to be for some distinct avowed object.¹

It will thus be seen that not only does Fārābī regard Individualism to be proposition worth consideration but even his Communism is opposed to the Greek or the Platonic idea under which human beings were to become mere chess-men without any individuality of their own apart from their individuality as members of the 'City.'

Motives for Collective Action.—Fārābī enumerates those motives under which the Individualistic State, or as he calls it, the 'State of Ignorance' comes into being, or in other words, the causes which lead men to form a political society.² According to him the first cause of the co-operation of man with man is force, when one person who has resources, physical or moral, at his disposal, makes a whole body of the people subservient to

¹ *Ārā*, 88.

² As has been mentioned above, in Islamic ideology 'Ignorance' implies pre-Islamic state. But here this epithet is used to denote the condition of political society which does not conform to the 'Model.' The term must not be taken to denote any prejudice whatever.

him. The second possible motive as given by Fārābī comes very near what is called Patriarchal Theory; for, says he, some people consider that the very incident of birth entails co-operation between father and children as against all others so that those descended from the same father are more likely to co-operate with one another than others not belonging to the group.¹ Another variety of co-operation is that caused by material relationship between two groups, while a fourth alternative motive is the proper organisation of the people by the Supreme Head, the Ra'isu'l-awwal. We have mentioned above that Fārābī has got a special theory of the Compact for Mutual Renunciation of Rights, and he says that according to some this would be the basis of political co-operation which would result from oaths and promises ensuing from the pact that no one would harm or hate his fellow-men and all would be like members of the same body if any need arose to defend the political society from a common enemy. Language and custom also form a strong bond for unions of men, while lastly though not the least, comes the geographical factor, the habitation in the same city, which binds people together.²

Here is a fine analysis of the causes of the establishment and maintenance of States, and

¹ *Ārā*, 110.

² *Ibid.*

although Fārābī enumerates them as the opinions of different persons or groups in States other than the Model State, still what he is really doing is to give an analysis of the underlying factors which went to build the States in his own time, States that classical ideals but were practical, human institutions in regular working order. And as human institutions vary very little in their innermost essence, we would find that most of Fārābī's dicta hold true to-day much as they did a thousand years ago. We may well wonder at his modern trend of thought when we know that he flourished long before the almost puerile controversies between the Papists and the Imperialists during Middle Ages of European history.

Varieties of States ; Empire.—While enumerating the varieties of the City or States other than the Model Commonwealth, Fārābī asks some questions which are very much alive even to-day. As has been said at least when dealing with States other than the Model City, he is drawing on his own personal experience, and although the nomenclature of these political societies slightly differ in the two books before us, the principles underlying his thought are more or less the same. He divides States into a number of categories, such as States of 'Necessity,' 'Ease,' 'Desires,' etc., according to the most prominent object of

the citizens. Thus in the States of Necessity the primary object of the Head is to arrange for the necessities of the citizens, in the States of Desires it is to make life of the people luxurious with plenty of resources in order that they might eat, drink, and be merry, while in the case of State of Ease the citizens would be content if they are assured of a life of comfort and if their desires would not go beyond moderate limits.¹

Apart from this classification, which seems to be idealistic to a certain extent, Fārābī has a definite place for the trait of political character under which a nation wants to have hegemony over other nations. He gives reasons for this 'mastery' (*ghalbah*) and says that it is sought for by a people owing to its desire for safety, ease or luxury and all that leads to the satisfaction of these pretended necessities. The integrated and powerful States want that they might be able to get all they desire. There is nothing, says he, against human nature for the strong to overpower the weak, so nations which try to get other nations under their control consider it quite proper to do so, and it is justice both to control the weak and for the weak to be so controlled, and the subdued nation should do all it can for the good of its masters.²

¹ *Ārā*, 90.

² *Ibid.*, 111-ff.

There is no doubt that all this seems jarring to our ears, but we must remember that this is not Fārābī's ideal, and secondly that with all the lapse of centuries and the international ideology which is the current coin of Politics, the psychology of the nations to-day is much the same as described by the Master centuries ago.

Fārābī says that the people of an Imperialistic State, the *Madinatu'l-taghallub* as he calls it, excel in having mastery over others either physically or spiritually in such a way that the latter should be at their service in body and in mind. But the more chivalrous among them are such that even when they have to shed human blood they do so only face to face, not while their opponent is asleep or showing his back, nor do they take away his property except after giving him proper warning of their intentions. Such a community does not rest till it thinks it has become supreme for ever, and does not give any other nation an opportunity of overpowering it, always regarding all other peoples their opponents and enemies and keeping itself on guard.¹

Colonies.—Fārābī is quite clear about the principles of colonisation. He says that it is possible for the denizens of a State to scatter about in different parts of the Globe because they have

¹ *Siyas*, 64-ff.

been overtaken by an enemy or by an epidemic, or through economic necessity. There are two alternatives open to the colonists; either they would migrate in such a way as to form one single commonwealth, or else divide themselves in different political societies. In any case these colonists would really form distinct communities owing to the uniformity in their character, their methods and their purpose, and (probably as they would have no local prejudices or local traditions) they would be at liberty to frame any laws according to their needs provided there is an agreement for such a change.¹ It may, however, come to pass that a large body of these people are of opinion that it is not necessary to change the laws which they have brought from their mother country, then they would simply codify existing laws and begin to live under them.² It will thus be perceived that Fārābī not only contemplates colonisation but also self-government of a republican kind, a contemplation which is well in accord with modern conceptions.

The Ideal Head of the State.—There is one very significant passage in which Fārābī gives us this ideal of the headship of the 'non-model' State. After enumerating the qualities requisite

¹ *Siyas*, 50.

² *Ibid*, 51.

for the headship of these States individually, he says, that the best among the Heads is one who makes the citizens of his commonwealth acquire independence, plenty and contentment, while he himself wants neither plenty nor self-aggrandizement but is content with praise for his words and acts, and nothing would please him more than if his words and acts are spoken of kindly in his own lifetime and after him.¹ This is truly a noble ideal but one which is seldom realised by even the best of those who would have sway over their fellow-men.²

It will thus be seen that most of what Fārābī says is just the sort of thing which we come across in our own day. Alliances and ententes, races for armaments, colonies for the sake of raw materials and as markets for finished product, mutual leanings and suspicions are the order of the day in much the same manner as Fārābī contemplates in what he calls 'States of Ignorance.'

¹ *Siyas*, 62.

² There is a definite contrast between the Eastern and the Western conceptions in this respect. While in the West we come across numerous quarrels between kings and peoples in the shape of demand for supplies and redress of grievances, we find that the Eastern monarchy is nearly always mellowed by deep regard for the welfare of the subjects. The result is that even under despotism there is a greater love for the monarch in the East than is found in most European monarchies and Western monarchies have been allowed to exist only when they have ceased to interfere in all that is material to the welfare of the people.

The only difference between him and ourselves is that the citizens of his non-model States are quite frank about things, while we say one thing and do just the opposite to what we say. Fārābī's Imperialist frankly rules subject races for his own economic welfare, while the modern Imperialist does so as a great burden on his shoulders and for the good of the subject peoples or for purely humanitarian ideals. Fārābī says that the reason for empire-building is the same as human nature which always craves to overpower the weak and the modern mind might feel upset at this argument. But it must be remembered that slavery has quite recently been forbidden *de jure*, and even now it cannot be said that the ideal of the human race is equality of status and service. One is not quite sure which is preferable, for the society individual slavery where the slave is well treated and protected like a member of the family, or where the so-called free men, women and children are bombarded, gassed, maimed, tortured and put to death for the greed of their property and their country.

Conclusion.—We have given a few political theories propounded by Fārābī. As will be seen, their compass is very large, and they cover practically all that is connoted by the term 'Political Theory,' namely the formation of the State,

sovereignty, criteria for sovereign power, integration of men in families, in tribes, in States, in empires, with the enunciation of communism, individualism the principles of patriarchal theory, republicanism, colonisation as well as numerous other topics. No doubt the nature of the treatises before us demands that these topics should be only lightly touched, but even that shows what a modern trend of mind the Master had. There is no doubt some of his theories are based to a certain extent on Greek thought, chiefly Platonic and neo-Platonic, current in his day, but it will be seen that much of what he wrote was also based on his own clear vision and political experience. There is no doubt that his brochures foreshadow theories such as those of the Social Contract and Sovereignty which were to be current in Europe in centuries afterwards.

Chapter 5

THE TENTH AND THE ELEVENTH CENTURIES

Introduction.—The tenth and the eleventh centuries were marked by great turmoil in the western world. While both Spain and Portugal were ruled by the Muslims of Asia and Africa, in spite of the forced conversion of a large part of Germany to Christianity by Charlemagne Europe was still a prey to schism and disunion. About the beginning of the eleventh century, England was weakened by civil wars, and although the Franks had finally conquered Gaul and had extended their hegemony over practically the whole of Western Europe, still the nett result of this hegemony proved to be, not the union of what was later called France and Germany but a source of continuous quarrel between these two nations. The condition of the Italian peninsula was not very much better, for what had once been one of the most flourishing nation of the world was rent asunder by the iron wedge of the patrimony of St. Peter. As if all this was not enough, the

Church had come to exercise a direct influence over the politics of the continent and the Pope had become powerful enough even to depose the successor of Julius Cæsar and Charlemagne, 'the Holy Roman Emperor,' and to force him to stand for hours on end before the Papal palace before he could hope to have his sins expiated. Christian Europe was moreover, full of monasteries and nunneries, the inmates of which followed the precept of Christ in not visibly earning any livelihood themselves, but who nonetheless lived lives of luxury and plenty which might be a source of envy for the richest potentate of the West, and whose 'houses' were full of all that money could provide in those days.

In the face of this state of affairs, which was bound to have its reaction to the detriment of Europe, the people of the Islamic faith were acting as the harbingers of a culture the equal of which this planet has rarely seen. After the death of the great Messenger of Arabia in 632 A.C. the political and moral influence of Islam spread far and wide till in the eleventh century of the Christian era it extended to the Pyrenees in the West to Central India in the East; and although in the period which is being surveyed there was not as much coherence among the Muslim peoples as had existed during the era of the Good Caliphs.

still if we were to take into consideration the fact that in all the countries which enjoyed the rule of Islam the same principles of law and the same constitution of Government were in force, we shall come to the conclusion that there was a real similarity between the various parts which constituted the Islamic Commonwealth. There is no doubt that the centre of this vast empire—the person of the Caliph at Baghdād—had greatly weakened in influence and the Caliph had become a puppet now in the hands of the Turks, then in the power of the Persians ; still this had not meant any decrease in the power of the State or in the tremendous prestige which he enjoyed, for it was the titled nobles of this very Caliph who were invading Mathura in the East and defeating the Eastern Roman Empire in Asia Minor, while the scions of the family of Banī Omayyah were violently knocking at the gates of France, Germany, and Italy in the West.

Still as we have seen, the influence of the successors of Hārūn and Māmūn was without doubt on its downward path, and the centre of gravity of the Islamic State was gradually shifting from Baghdād towards the East. As early as the time of the Caliph al-Mustakfi,¹ a Persian family known as the Banī Buwaih had taken possession of Isfahān,

¹ 944-946 A. C.

invaded the rich plains of 'Irāq and risen to such power and prominence that when the Caliph wanted to thwart the machinations of the Turkī nobles he had to call in the aid of these very rebels. Once in Baghdād, the power and the prestige of the Persians knew no bounds, and the Buwaihids were not only granted the high sounding titles of Mu'izzu'd-Dowlah, 'Imādu'd-Dowlah and Ruknu'd-Dowlah but the Caliph made the eldest Amīru'l-Umarā and Sultān, and his name began to appear on the coins of the realm along with that of the Caliph himself. Sultān Mu'izzu'd-Dowlah's power continued to increase till he began to control the government of the empire itself and in the end deposed Mustakfi and enthroned another scion of the Abbasid family, al-Muṭī'.¹ The Buwaihids naturally continued to be in the ascendant during that reign as well, but their power began to wane owing to internecine feuds, so that they could stem the rising tide of the Fatimids of Egypt who were able to capture a number of the provinces which had belonged to the Caliphate, including Hijāz itself. In spite of their obvious decline, one of the Buwaihids was still proud enough to demand from the puppet Caliph² the grandiose titles of Maliku'l-Mulūk or King of Kings.

¹ 946-974.

² Al-Qādir, 991-1031.

In the East Alptagīn and Subuktagīn, and after them the latter's son Maḥmūd of Ghaznah, became famous by their daring exploits, earning the gratitude of the Caliph al-Qādir who honoured Maḥmūd by the titles of Yamīnu'd-Dowlah, Amīnu'l-Millat and Sulṭān. This Sulṭān Maḥmūd, the hero of a thousand romances, became the ruler of all the lands from the Oxus and the Jaxartes to the Ganges in the east and to the city of Khurāsān in the west. In the same way an Īrānian nobleman, Amīr Qābūs b. Washmgīr became master of all the lands represented by Jurjān and Ṭabaristān. The successors of Sulṭān Maḥmūd of Ghaznah were not so capable as himself and his own son, Mas'ūd Ghaznavī, was defeated by a Turk of Khurāsān, Seljūq by name. After Seljūq's death his people elected Ṭughral Bēg as their leader, who put to flight the Buwaihid forces in a number of places, thus taking possession of a number of provinces such as Jurjān and Khwārizm. Like their predecessors the Seljūqīs soon became the power behind the throne of the Abbasid Caliph, and when Ṭughral Bēg finally extracted the Caliph al-Qāim¹ from the grasp of his enemies, the grateful Caliph conferred on him practically all the privileges of royalty and, after honouring him with the title of Sulṭān, himself placed the crown on his head.

¹ 1030-1075.

The Seljūqīs thus became the most powerful rulers of Western Asia, and after the accession of Alp Arslān there was no nation which could vie with them in prowess and might. This well-known Sultān conquered Armenia and Georgia and routed the Greek forces in the brilliant action at Melāzgird. It was Alp Arslān who appointed as his wazīr one who was no less renowned in the field of thought and literature than in the field of battle, *i.e.*, Nizāmu'l-Mulk of Tūs to whom we will revert later.

In spite of all this storm and stress, when the foundation of the Caliphate of Baghdād had been hollowed out and when the real power in the State was passing from the Turk to the Īrānīan and from the Īrānīan to the Turk, it is remarkable that the patronage of arts and sciences continued as before and the continent of Asia went on producing thinkers and men of learning of whom it may well be proud. It is the epoch when historians like al-Berūnī and Mas'ūdī, philosophers like Fārābī, poets like Mutenebbī, writers like Firdausī, were making a mark in Western and Central Asia, and it is difficult to find a single art or science in which the Muslims of the eleventh century A.C. have not left their permanent influence.

Political Machinery.—The rather complicated

political machinery really consisted of two quite distinct parts, one with the person of the Caliph as its apex and the other which was centred in the real ruler of the land whether he belonged to the race of Seljūq or Buwaih. There is no doubt that whatever power a Turkish or an Īrānian adventurer possessed really emanated from the person of the Caliph himself; although it is quite evident that the Caliph was forced to hand over his authority to these leaders because he could not withstand the tremendous power of their onslaughts. Under these circumstances we could say that while the constitutional sovereignty rested with the Caliph he had transferred most of his political authority to the Banī Buwaih or Banī Seljūq as the case might be.

Here it would be well to digress a little in order to understand the background of the Islamic politics of the tenth and the eleventh centuries. It is regarded as a political axiom by some that the continent of Asia has been the cradle of autocracy, and if any writer on politics wishes to lay a certain amount of stress on the word 'despotism' all he has to do is simply to prefix it by the convenient adjective 'Oriental.' In the first place it is absolutely against all the facts of history that despotism of this *genre* should have had its roots only in one particular

continent of the habitable globe. The despotic principle under which the Emperor Nero could throw Christian men, women and children before hungry lions, under which the Pope of Rome became the arbiter not only of the celestial but of the terrestrial paradise, under which Henry VIII of England could upset the political and social structure of his kingdom at the mere call of his personal lust, under which the representative of Their Most Catholic Majesties, Fernando and Isabella, the Archbishop Ximenes, could make a huge bonfire of all the precious Arabic Manuscripts he could lay his hand on in Granada—it would be difficult to find many instances of this kind of despotism in the East. We have to remember that the Caliphs whose times we are scanning, were themselves, in theory at least, elected officers of the Islamic State, although in course of time the office had become virtually hereditary; then if we go a little deeper into the politics of early Islamic States we find that although the rulers have been more or less supreme on the executive side, they have had to bow before legal principles enunciated by an outside Divine agency. These principles acted as a check not only on their legislative power but at times on the way they enforced laws as well, and thus their rule cannot be called

despotic in the European sense at all.

There is one other factor which should be noted here. Every State in this world of ours is necessarily based on some principle or other which is essentially peculiar to it. In its early stages the Bolshevik State would not give any political rights to those who did not add to the material wealth of the country by their personal physical effort; States based on capitalistic principles such as the United States of America and England, usually give political power to those possessing a certain amount of property, however nominal, or who pay some kind of tax to the government; and if we were to look at the distribution of political power in Europe before the French Revolution we would find that it was distributed among either the courtiers of the priests, *i.e.*, those who had the privilege of being nearest to the king himself. If we analyse these instances we come to the conclusion that the State allows political power only to those in whom it has implicit confidence; and in the nature of things it cannot do otherwise, for how could we expect that the State should allow those to share in its government who do not agree with its basic principles and those whose sole idea is to undermine those principles? In the same way the world has passed through a stage in

which political authority was distributed among those who followed the same religious tenets, and those tenets reacted not only on internal but on external policy as well. It is hardly a hundred years since the Inquisitions were the rule in Spain; and if we peruse the treaties agreed to by European powers as late as the beginning of the nineteenth century we would discover many with the opening clause 'In the name of the Holy and Indivisible Trinity' appearing at the commencement. Look at the period of European History which ended in the last Great War, and you will find that the European State system was to a large extent built on the Christian religion, and apart from the Patrimony of St. Peter which existed as late as 1870 and exists in a modified form even to-day, whole tracts of the Germanic Empire were in possession of the bishops and archbishops of the Catholic Church, while the representatives of religion were regarded as superior to the representatives of the Commons in the legislative assemblies of France and England, so much so that a judicial ruling of the time of Henry IV of England speaks of the Bible as a "general law on which all positive laws are based."¹ It is really this spirit

¹ Year Book 34 Hen. IV, p. 50, quoted in Holland, *Jurisprudence*, ch. V.

which was responsible for calling the last war with the Turks resulting in the entry of the allied forces into Jerusalem, the Last Crusade, and for the fact that if King George VI were to renounce the Anglican Church to-day he would have to say good-bye to his throne as well.¹

Thus we find that a time comes in the history of practically every country when religious faith proves to be a far stronger bond of union between man and man than merely material, social or economic factors. We see that it was the Christian religion which formed the basis of the 'Holy Roman Empire,' and in the Middle Ages no religion was tolerated in most of the countries of Europe except the Christian religion. In exactly the same manner the basis of the State in the place and period which we are scanning was the religion of Islam; but it should be carefully noted that the non-Muslims who were citizens of the Islamic State possessed a large number of rights, and as these non-Muslims were the natural *protégés* of the Muslim State they were technically called the *thimmīs*. When we compare the treatment meted out to the Jews at the hands of a king of England of the calibre of Edward I with the treatment accorded to the

¹This, according to the Act of Settlement, 1701, which is still in force.

non-Muslim citizens of the Muslim State we are forced to recognise the greatness of human feeling and the large-heartedness which was at the basis of the doctrine of *thimmīship*.

It was necessary to dilate a little on these two aspects of the politics of the period because the principles underlying it are found both in the East and the West. There is, however, this important difference that the doctrine of *thimmīship* made the conditions of life in Asia far more tolerable than in contemporary Europe. It is of the utmost importance that a student of history should shake off all prejudice for or against a system of life and thought which does not happen to exist in his particular epoch, and should try as much as possible to place himself in the position of those who lived in the period he is trying to understand. For if he judges the people and institutions of days gone by according to the standards existing to-day he would be guilty of anachronism and would be doing a gross injustice.

The political institutions of the Abbasids took their root in the reforms of the second Caliph of the line, al-Manṣūr.¹ In the period of the Abbasid rule the whole administration was supervised directly by the Caliph himself, but Hārūn² appointed a wazīr and gave him sole

¹ 754-773.

² 785-809.

charge of all governmental machinery. Among such wazīrs we read the names of eminent administrators like Ja'far the Bermakid and Faḍl b. Suhail, who made their mark during their term of office. The government as a whole was called the Dīwānu'l-'Azīz and its machinery soon became a very highly complicated system. It was divided into a number of departments such as Dīwānu'l-Kharāj (Revenue Department), Dīwānu'l-Barīd (Postal Department), Dīwānu'l-Jund (Army Department), Dīwānu'l-Aḥdāṣ wa'sh-Shurṭah (Police Department) and other departments of a like nature. In addition to these, the Caliph al-Mahdī¹ began to appoint a Ḥājib or Lord Chamberlain whose chief function consisted of introducing foreign ambassadors and their representatives to the person of the Caliph and performing other duties pertaining to the dignity of the Court. As regards the judiciary the general rule in vogue was that the Qāḍiu'l-Quḍāt (Chief Justice), the various other Qāḍis or judges and their subordinate judicial officers should be directly responsible to the Caliphs for their acts. As a matter of general principle the different *thimmī* or non-Muslim sects were entitled to have their civil suits adjudged by their own judges without interference of the

¹ 773-785.

government, while criminal suits in which any citizen of the State, Muslim or non-Muslim, was arraigned, went to the department called *Dīwānu'n-Nazārī fi'l-Mazālim* the highest tribunal of which was generally presided over by the Caliph himself.

Provinces were in charge of the provincial governors, and at least in the early part of the Abbasid period, those governors were often shifted from one province to another and their movements reported to the Caliph by the *Ḥājibu'l-Barīd*, or Postmaster-General of the province. In course of time, however, when the central authority became weak and these provincial governors became independent in their own provinces, these *ḥājibs* continued to remain in the courts of the provincial potentates in much the same way as British High Commissioners and Residents are appointed to the capitals of British Dominions and protectorates nowadays.

Most of what has been described relates to the period when the Islamic State was under the direct supervision of the Caliph; but with the decline in the power of the central government and the rise of the *Sāmānids*, the *Buwaihids*, the *Ghaznawids* and the *Seljūqids*, the system of government underwent a complete change and

real power passed from the wazīr to the Amīru'l-Umarā, *i.e.*, the person who had conquered a large part of the land and began to control the very centre of the Caliphate. It was this potentate, whether a Seljūqid or a Buwaihid, who now began to appoint wazīrs and other high officers of the empire. It was the Caliph al-Wāsiq¹ who first gave the title of Sultān to his Turkish Commander-in-Chief, Ashnās. After him the title remained in abeyance till the rise of the Banī Buwaih, who were not only invested with the title of Sultān by the Caliph but were actually crowned by him and invested with the royal diadem and robes.

In spite of all these changes we must remember that whoever was in power, whether a wazīr, a Sultān or Malik, took pride in being counted as a nobleman of the Islamic State and in belonging to the entourage of the Caliph. It is a remarkable fact that the dethronement of one and the enthronement of another Caliph were matters of almost everyday occurrence, there was not one outside the Abbasid dynasty who had the courage to proclaim himself the successor of the Prophet of Islam, a fact which proves the sanctity of the office of the Caliph even in the hour of its agony.

Enough has been said to show that although

¹ 842-847.

the structure of government was in essence Semitic and Arabic, still a strong superstructure of Aryan and Persian ideas had almost completely enveloped it by non-Arabic material. The two ideals were in fact antagonistic to each other; for while the one was comparatively old and conservative, the other took pride in being devoted to radicalism and innovation and looked back to Persian and Aryan traditions though by that time it had been thoroughly got saturated with the teachings of Islam. If we look at the state of affairs then prevailing, we find that contemporary thought was the direct result of one or other of these two ideals; and it is these principles which are found in almost all the writings of the period. While some of the writers base their arguments on purely Islamic and Arabic traditions others of equal calibre look forward and formulate their thought more on contemporary events. In the field of politics, for instance, we find that some writers feel that the best possible thing for a State is to revive the principles which were acted upon in the time of the Apostle of Islam and the first Four Caliphs, while others frankly acknowledge the impossibility of such a revival, accept as *faits accomplis* the new political factors which had come into being since then and would

divert the path of political progress into these new channels. Thus there is clear dividing line between the two schools of political science in the tenth and the eleventh century, one leading to the revival of pure Arabism, the other to a certain amount of alienism; the representative of one is Māwardī and of the other Amīr Kaika'ūs.

A. MĀWARDĪ (974—1058)

Abu'l-Ḥassan 'Alī b. Muḥammad b. Ḥabīb al-Māwardī was born in 368/974 and died at the advanced age of 86 in 450/1058. He was regarded as one of the greatest and most learned jurists of his time and although he belonged to the orthodox Shafī'ite school of jurisprudence still we find traces of rationalism in some of what he has left us. He began his active life as a professor of law and jurisprudence at Baṣrah and Baghdād and when his fame began to spread far and wide he was made Qaḍī'u'l-Quḍāt of Baghdād and was offered the honorific title of Aqḍā'l-Quḍāt or the Supreme Justice, which he, however, declined because he said there were far abler people who deserved the title much more than himself. His biographers are profuse in their praises calling him the great, the high, the wonder-

ful leader¹ and 'one of the most prominent and biggest of the Shafi'i *savants*,'² and there is no doubt that there was not one of his contemporaries who was more cognisant of the principles underlying the Islamic State. It is related that he did not publish any of his works in his lifetime, and when a friend asked why he kept his books back he replied that it was because he felt that his motives in writing them were not as pure as he should have wished and that he did not know whether God the Almighty had accepted these literary offerings or not. Under these circumstances he requested his friends to be present at the time of his death, and to put his hand in his just before the last gasp; if he held his hand tight he was to know that God had not accepted his books and all the works were to be thrown into the Tigris, while if his friend's hand was not firmly grasped that it should be taken to mean that God had accepted the offering and the work should be published. Anyhow when he was on the point of death he let go the hand which was placed in his; so his works were published according to his will.³

It was probably due to his great erudition that

¹ Subkī, *Tabaqātu'sh-Shāfi'iyah*, III, 303.

² Ibn Khallikān, *Wafiyatu'l-A'yan*, I, 410.

³ Subkī.

he became extraordinarily courageous as time passed. We know that he was one of the friends of the Buwaihid Jalālu'd-Dowlah; still when the latter proposed that he should be granted the title of Maliku'l-Mulūk by the Caliph, Māwardī resolutely refused to give his decision in favour of this proposal saying that the only person who deserved this title was the Almighty Himself.

His Works.—Māwardī has left a number of books, of which those dealing with the science of politics and administration are the following :—

(1) *Aḥkāmu's-Sulṭānīyah* which has been printed in original and translated into a number of Asiatic and European languages ;

(2) *Naṣīhatu'l-Mulūk*¹ or Advice to Kings ;

(3) *Qawāninu'l-Wizārat*² or the Laws of the Ministry, also called *Qānūnu'l-Wazīr wa Siyasatu'l-Malik* or the Law of the Minister and the Politics of the King ;

(4) *Taḥṣīlu'n-Nazar fī Taḥṣīli'z-Zafar*³ or the Control of Sight for facilitating victory.

The Imāmat.—As a matter of fact there is not one department of State which has not been fully discussed by our author ; but here we will content

¹ MSS. Paris, De Slane, No. 244.

² MSS. Vienna, Konsularakademie, Krafft, p. 475.

³ MSS. Gotha, Pertsch, Verz., No. 1872.

ourselves here with a discussion of what he has to say about the central government. To begin with he gives the *raison d'être* of the State. He says that God laid down laws in order that issues might be satisfactorily settled and the principles of right, truth and goodness may be known ; He also entrusted the control of His creatures to various governments so that the administration of the world might be properly carried on.¹ He goes on to say that the Imāmat, which means presidentship in modern political phraseology, is the foundation on which the rules and regulations of the community depend. These are solid truths and the more we consider the circumstances of the State and the government even to-day the more are we convinced of them. To put Māwardī's idea in a modern form : what he means is that the real motive of the State is the rule of Justice and Truth, and secondly, it is the machinery of the State which sifts the good from the bad, virtue from vice, the sanctioned from the prohibited.

Māwardī then passes on to the meaning of the Imāmat and says that the real motive of the institution is the preservation of the Faith and the strengthening of political bonds, so that it is of the utmost importance that someone should be chosen Imām by the consensus of the community

¹ *Aḥkām*, Intr.

or, as we should put it nowadays, by universal suffrage. He says that the Imāmat is not only an institution sanctified by tradition and history but can be proved to be necessary according to pure reason ; for all wise men entrust their affairs to a leader able to keep them from being molested and to adjudge between them in case of mutual quarrels.¹ Even to-day, after the lapse of nearly a thousand years the State is regarded as a *sine qua non* of human society because it can keep off the danger of persistent molestation of any set of persons and can appoint its agents to adjudge between man and man.

Māwardī gives quite a mass of details about the election and appointment of the Imām and discusses the qualification of voters and candidate. It is interesting to note that instead of regarding purely artificial factors such as age, property and residence—factors which are accepted sufficient in the countries of the modern world—Māwardī considers only those to be qualified who can distinguish between good and evil, between right and wrong, between the deserving and the undeserving. According to him there are two ways in which the Imām may be elected : by the vote of the qualified voters and by the nomination of the outgoing Imām. It is interesting that when

¹ *Aḥkām*, ch. I.

the prime minister of England resigns his office nowadays it is he who advises the king as to who would be the best person to take his place, and this practice is identical with the state of affairs in France at least till June 1941, where it was the outgoing prime minister who likewise used to advise the President of the Republic. Māwardī enumerates the duties of the Imām or the Caliph and says that he should protect the Faith, adjudicate between man and man so that no person in power should be able to tyrannise over others, defend the liberty of the State, punish those who might transgress the Law, make the payment of salaries and emoluments just and regular, appoint honest and reliable men as his representatives in the land, and should never give himself up either to a life of luxury or prayer so as to be forced to hand over the management of the realm to others. While mentioning the powers and duties of the Imām he quotes a certain poet in order to describe what he considers the ideal qualifications for the Imāmat :

وقلدوا امرئ لله درك
رحب الزراع بأمر الحرب مصطلعا
لامترفاً ان رخاء العيش ساعده
ولا اذا عض مكروه به خشعا

ما زال يحلب در الدهر اشتره
 يكون متبعا يوما ومتبعا
 حتى استمر على شرر مريره
 مستحکم الراي لا فخما ولا ضرعا¹

Ministry.—After describing the conditions of the Imāmat Māwardī turns to the question of the wizārat or ministry. At the outset he says that the appointment of a wazīr does not mean that the Imām or Caliph should give up all connection with the administration of the State, but the real significance of his appointment consists in the fact that “in the province of politics it is better to have a co-adjutor rather than one sole person at the helm of affairs”;² and when the Prophet Moses could make his brother Aaron his wazīr in order that his hands should be strengthened,³ then, says Māwardī, surely in the administration

¹ “God be praised for all His Goodness. Make such a person your ruler as should be benevolent and warlike; if he is wealthy he should not take pride in his wealth; if he has been surrounded by adverse circumstances he would not be upset by them; he should be willing to act according to the needs of the moment, sometimes following others’ advice, at other time making others follow his; and when he makes up his mind to act, he should act with firmness and resolution.” *Aḥkām*, ch. I.

² *Ibid.*, ch. II.

³ Qur’ān, XX, 29-32.

of the State it is allowable for the Imām to have a wazīr beside him. He says that the wizārat is of two kinds, the wizārat of Delegation and the wizārat of Execution. The wazīr of Delegation is the person whom the Imām has the fullest confidence and to whom the whole administration of the realm is delegated. The sole difference between the wazīr and the Imām himself is that the wazīr of Delegation cannot appoint any one as his successor and the Imām can dismiss the officers appointed by him. It may interest the reader to know that Māwardī regards it as possible for the State to have a regular constitution when he says: "If the wazīr gives a certain order and the Imām opposes it, then we should consider the essence of the order; if it is found that the order has been issued according to the dictates of the Constitution then it should not be within the power of the Imām to rescind it."¹ We can conclude with reason that Māwardī was not ignorant of the meaning of the constitutional government even as we understand it.

Probably the officer who is called the wazīr of Execution by our author is no other than the Secretary to the Government in modern India. He says that the chief function of this wazīr consists in executing the decrees of the Imām, and

¹ *Aḥkām*, ch. II.

he should be the main official channel of information for him. Māwardī thinks that seven qualities are required for a person aspiring to this office, and they are honesty, confidence, absence of greed, good relationship with the people (otherwise it would not be possible to do justice), intelligence and the power of grasping the truth of things, absence of luxury and amorousness (otherwise he would fall a prey to vice, for a life of love and luxury is prone to benumb the faculties of the mind), and lastly, diplomacy and experience. Māwardī says that it is not necessary that the holder of the office should be a follower of Islam, and a non-Muslim *thimmī* can also be appointed a wazīr of Execution. We are reminded of the present day conditions in the United States of America and England when we read that if the Caliph dismisses a wazīr of Execution this dismissal need not necessarily react on any other officer, but if the wazīr of Delegation is dismissed then all the wazīrs of Execution are automatically dismissed.

Like all organised administrations, the government should be divided into various departments dealing with the business of government, such as revenue, army and other high offices of State. Māwardī calls the government by the generic name of *Dīwān*. As our own Hindustānī word

dīwānī has been derived from *dīwān* it would be interesting to know its origin as Māwardī puts it. There were two derivations current in his day. One was that the great Sasanid, Kistrā Anūshīrwān, once went to his secretariat and saw that his clerks were solving arithmetical sums aloud; and as he thought it was rather a silly sight, he exclaimed that they were all *dīwānah* or mad. The other theory was that as *dewān* (singular *dew*) meant giants, and as the clerks and accountants were giants in mathematical sums, so their chief bureau came to be known as *dewānī* or *dīwānī*.¹ Māwardī simply quotes these two theories current in his time without either believing or disbelieving them and says that, whatever the origin of the word might be, it was in the time of the Caliph 'Umar that the government of the Islamic State was first organised into various departments. He enumerated four chief offices of government, i.e., the Army Board, the Board of Provincial Boundaries, the Board of

¹ *Aḥkām*. It is evident that here Māwardī is only repeating what he considered to be the best derivation of the word. The second theory is probably derived from an old story that once Anūshīrwān ordered his clerks to prepare a certain account in the course of three days, and being impatient of the result, himself went into the secretariat to see whether the work was being performed or not. On seeing how quickly they were doing the sums and differences he exclaimed that they were veritably *dewān* or giants. Etymologically the word probably means 'to collect.' See *Ghiyāsu'l-Lughāt*, 1878, p. 185.

Appointment and Dismissal of Officers, and the Treasury. The army department served as census board as well, for in it were recorded the names of all those who could bear arms. In the same way, in the department of provinces were entered the names of all the *thimmīs* of different provinces as well as the statistics about tribute, the tithe and the exemption tax.¹ Moreover it was the office of record for the mines of the provinces and the amount of royalty that was due on that account to the State Treasury. It may interest the reader to know that the idea of complete internal free trade, which is still far from being realised in so many countries of the world, had already been realised in the Islamic State, and it was regarded as an act of impiety to levy any kind of duty for the right to transfer a commodity from one place to another within the realm. In the department of appointments and dismissals were recorded the standards and conditions of various services, their duties, salaries, terms of office and such other information, while in the Treasury, which was perhaps one of the most important departments of State, a register was kept of the taxes the outcome of which was distributed among the Muslims, such as the Zakāt and Ṣadaqah from the Muslims and the spoils of war.

¹ *Kharāj*, 'Ushr, Jiziah.

At the same time the officer in charge of this department, who was called the Kātibu'd-Diḡān, was responsible for the registration of the laws of the State and for keeping all the offices within the bounds of their rights and duties. We learn from Māwardī that it was regarded as perfectly legal to enact new laws at least for the conquered territories and colonies, and this very important work was also entrusted to the Kātibu'd-Diḡān.

Justice.—Māwardī says that seven conditions are required for a proper judge: he should be of the male sex (although according to Abū Ḥanīfah, as a woman can be cited as a witness she can adjudicate as well, and Ibn Jarīr agrees with him); he should be clever and intelligent; he should be a free man; he should be a Muslim (although Abū Ḥanīfah is of opinion that even a non-Muslim may be appointed a judge); he should be honest, pious and above suspicion; he should be well-versed in the principles of law; and lastly he should not have any defect in his power of seeing and hearing, so that there should be no doubt left during the presentation of a case. He is of opinion that it should be made absolutely certain whether a person is really possessed of these qualities either by previous knowledge or else by means of examination. He regards this office as so sacred that when a man

has been appointed a judge once he should neither be dismissed nor should he ordinarily resign his post.

In a word, there is hardly a single topic in the field of administration, legislation, execution of laws and the judiciary on which Māwardī has not expressed an opinion. He has discussed even such topics as taxation, provincial government, local administration, censorship, crimes, fiefs, etc. Here we would limit ourselves to a review of his ideas on the constitution of the central government.

Argument on Central Government.—It has already been pointed out that although Māwardī was an orthodox Shāfi'ite, still we can discover a certain amount of rationalism in his writings. Thus when he tries to demonstrate the necessity of the Imāmat, he proves it not only by referring to the Islamic law but lays down a general proposition that it is in the nature of man, or rather of those among men who are superior to others in intellect, that they should hand over their affairs to one who "can keep them from being tyrannised over by others and should have the power of deciding between them in case of mutual quarrels."¹ In general, however, his arguments are based on the four

¹ *Aḥkām*, ch. I.

well-known sources of Islamic law, *i.e.*, the Qur'ān, the Traditions of the Apostle of Islam, the consensus of the Muslim people, and the personal judgment of the jurists, but whenever possible he relies solely on the Qur'ān without reference to any other source of law. Thus when he tries to demonstrate that the Imām should not fall a prey to luxurious living he reminds the reader of the order which God gave to the Prophet David when he appointed him His Caliph: "O David, We have appointed thee our Caliph on earth; so judge aright between man and man, and follow not desires that might lead thee away from the path of the Lord."¹ When he discusses the ways in which different categories of taxes ought to be utilised, he bases his argument entirely on the word of the Qur'ān; thus he quotes a verse to prove that the Zakāt should be distributed "among the poor and the needy, and those who collect them and those whose hearts are to be reconciled, and to free the captives and the debtors, and for the cause of God and for the wayfarer."² Along with the verses of the Qur'ān he argues from the orders of the Apostle of Islam as related in the Traditions; for instance when he wishes to prove that the Caliph has the right to appoint his own successor, he

¹ Qur'ān, XXXVIII.

² *Ibid.*, IX, 60.

argues from the battle of Mūtah, and says that the Prophet appointed his manumitted slave, Zaid b. Ṣābit, to take his place at the head of the Muslim army and at the same time ordered that in case of his death he should be replaced by Ja'far b. Abī Ṭālib, after him by 'Abdu'l-lāh b. Rawāḥah, and in case he is also killed the mantle of command should fall on the shoulders of whomever the soldiers might chose. "When", says Māwardī, "it was possible for the Prophet to make these nominations, it should be possible in case of the Khilāfat as well."¹ Describing the theory of the Islamic law of war he gives the instance of the Battle of the Camel when the Caliph 'Alī ordered that no person in the act of running away from the battlefield should be pursued and, while explaining the conditions appertaining to the office of the Qādī he quotes the instructions given by the Caliph 'Umar to Abū Mūsā el-Ash'arī when he appointed him to this office. Sometimes he uses the documents of the Umayyad and the 'Abbasid period as his premises; for instance he quotes the accession address of 'Umar b. 'Abdi'l-'Azīz to demonstrate the exalted ideal of the office of the Caliph,² and when he wants to point out the importance of the wizārat he quotes a proclamation of Māmūn where he

¹ *Aḥkām*, ch. I.² *Ibid.*, ch. VII.

declares that he wishes to appoint one as his minister who should be virtuous and conservative in his habits, experienced and versed in the ways of doing things, should be willing to undertake the most difficult missions, should be thoroughly reliable, whose silence should signify his great indulgence and whose conversation should demonstrate his great knowledge, who should be able to understand the innermost thoughts of others by the mere gesture of the eye, and even a second's conversation should suffice for him to get at the root of the matter; who should have the prestige of the rich, the foresight of the learned, the humility of the *savant*, and the acuteness of the jurist; who should be grateful for any good that might be done to him and should bear his troubles with patience.¹ Finally, although Māwardī hardly ever bases his arguments on contemporary events, still he sometimes passes the history of non-Muslim peoples under review; thus he takes us back to pre-Islamic days while describing the history of coinage and the animals of 'Irāq, and freely borrows from the history of Īrān and Arabia before the advent of the Apostle of Islam while describing the importance of the judiciary.²

Aḥkām, ch. II.

² *Ibid.*, ch. VII.

Māwardī's Method.—If we glance at the political ideas of our author we find that he nearly always looks back on the wonderful days gone by with a certain amount of pang and does not fully realise the importance of his own times. It seems really strange that although he was the personal friend of Banī Buwaih and was fully cognisant of the great changes the structure of the State which had already manifested themselves, still the constitution of the realm, as he depicts it, had ceased to exist nearly a hundred and fifty years before. This treatment is, in a way, Aristotelean; for the great Greek political philosopher also wrote long after the institutions, which he described with so much gusto, had ceased to have any meaning, and when classical Greece, which he so much applauds, had already bowed its proud head before the might of the semi-barbarian conqueror of Macedonia. In exactly the same way the spirit of the institutions which form the foundation of Māwardī's treatment had really been swept away by the storm from Turkistān and Īrān, and there was just as little connection between the administrative machinery as it existed in his own time and the old Islamic, Arabic State, as had existed between the Macedonian Empire of the time of Aristotle and the old City States of Athens and Sparta. Both

political thinkers had this great advantage, that they had an ideal before them which had already proved its worth, and they could well take a lesson from the mass of facts and figures, laws and precedents, institutions and State decrees, which had made their ideal State what it had been. We can, therefore, say that although the decisions arrived at by both these great thinkers may not have been derived from contemporary politics, still there is no doubt that their premises were perfectly correct, and herein lies their greatness.

Enough has been said to show that Māwardī was greatly influenced by the Islamic theory of the State and that he more or less ignored not only the foreign elements which had crept into the body-politic but also the changes which were being wrought before his very eyes. Between him and the next political thinker we are to scan, *i.e.*, Amīr Kaikā'ūs, there is this great difference, that the latter derives his inspiration from the history of Īrān and Turkistān rather than the peninsula of Arabia.

KAIKĀ'ŪS (1021-1082)

The *Qābūs Nāmah*, written in 475/1082, consists of the advice given by the Amīr 'Unşuru'l-Ma'ālī Kaikā'ūs b. Sikandar b. Qābūs b. Washmgīr

to his son Gīlān Shāh and dedicated to his progenitor Qābūs Shāh Shamsu'l-Ma'ālī. This Qābūs b. Washmgīr had inherited Jurjān and Māzendrān from his father and had added Gīlān and Ṭabaristān to his paternal dominions. The Amīr Kaikā'ūs was born in 412/1021 and wrote the *Qābūs Nāmah* at the age of 63 in 475/1082. The author has stated his reasons for compiling this work in the opening paragraph where he addresses his son and says: "Know my dear son that I am now an old man, and have been overborne by my years and the lack of my good acts. I know that the order of the decay of my life, which is writ large on my hoary hair, cannot be effaced by any power on the face of this earth. As I find my name on the list of those already gone by, I feel it a paternal duty to let you know what is in my own knowledge of the reproofs of the age and of the multifarious intrigues you may yourself have to face."¹ He then goes on to advise his son what he should do if he were to become a middle class man, how he should serve the king if he were to be raised to an exalted position, what policy he should pursue if he were to be appointed Minister of State, how he should deal with the army if he were to become the Commander-in-Chief, and how he should conduct public affairs if he were to be crowned

¹ *Qābūs Nāmah*, ch. 1.

King of the land. These are merely the headings of but a few chapters of the *Qābūs Nāmah* and if we were to glance at the whole book there would be few professions on which the author has not expressed his opinion. Here it would be interesting to give a few quotations from the book in order to show what the author's views are about the constitution of the State.

Contents of Qābūs Nāmah.—When the author enumerates the mode of serving the king he says: "O son, however near you may be to the King's majesty, you should never take pride in that proximity . . . It is your duty always to treat your sovereign with the goodness that is his due in order that he may reciprocate the same kind of treatment towards you; and if you treat him badly you should be ready to be treated in the same way. If by a turn of your fortune you should rise in the service of your king, you should take care never to be dishonest towards him."¹ In the same way, while describing the conditions appertaining to the ministership of the Crown, he admonishes his son that the minister should be intelligent and should be able to get at the root of things, should always be true to his sovereign, should treat the soldiers with justice, should try to increase the income of the State, populate the scantily

¹ *Qābūs Nāmah*, ch. XXXVII.

populated areas in order to get employment for the unemployed, and last, but not the least, should never be unjust. If the king be a minor, the minister should never regard him with scant respect, for "the princes are like water-fowl who never need to be taught how to swim."¹ It should be the duty of the minister to give all kinds of information about foreign potentates to the king, so that the country might be saved in time from wanton aggression.

Then he goes on to tell his son: "If perchance you are made a king you should become God-fearing, religious, clean of mind and free from immorality, and whatever you desire to do you should do it after taking counsel of your common-sense, for the greatest minister of a king is his own common-sense and wisdom. You should always tell the truth and rarely indulge in laughter in order to keep your prestige among your subjects. You should always think of the end and should not much mind the commencement of an act. You must remember that if both you and your minister are young then the fire of your youth will burn the body-politic almost to cinders. O son, the sole difference between a king and his subjects is that a king issues orders while his subjects obey them; so that if the royal decrees have no effect

¹ *Qābūs Nāmah*, ch. XL.

on the people there will be no difference left between a king and his subjects. It should also be borne in mind that a king should keep account of what is going on in other countries as well have information of what is going on in his own land.”¹

His Method.—In a word, the *Qābūs Nāmah* is full of admonitions like this, and its contents clearly show the extent to which it was possible for one to rise in those days. Its author freely gives illustrations of his theories both from the history of Islam, from contemporary facts and from the history of non-Muslim peoples. Thus in one place he quotes ‘Abbās, the uncle of the Prophet of Islam, when he addressed his son ‘Abdu’l-lāh as follows: “O son, if you wish that your enemies may not get the better of you, never tell a lie, never mention any one’s bad habits, never embezzle money, never oppose your enemy violently and never speak out your secrets to anybody.”² Then while discussing the principles of ministership he relates the story how Anūshīrwān’s minister Buzurchimīhr was once asked the reason why the Sasanians had failed in so many of their attempts, to which he aptly replied that the reason was that they entrusted important works to those who were incapable of undertaking them. When he dilates on the quality of honesty on the

¹ *Qābūs Nāmah*, ch. XLII.

² *Ibid.*, ch. XXXVII.

battlefield he quotes Alexander the Great who is reported to have said that whoever wins a battle by means of fraud and deceit is not fit to be a king. Not only does he freely give instances from the history of other lands but he seems to be ever willing to take lesson from the history that was being made in his own time by the Ghaznavids, the Buwaihids and other peoples of the non-Arab stock.

NIZĀMU'L-MULK TŪSĪ (1017-1091)

Any description of the eleventh century of the Christian era would be utterly incomplete without the portrayal of the great Seljūqī minister, Nizāmu'l-Mulk. We have already traced the political condition of Western Asia as far as the accession of Alp Arslān, which occurred in 1063. It was Alp Arslān who finally conquered all the territories in Western Asia till then ruled by the Eastern Roman Emperor of Constantinople, capturing the Emperor Diogenes himself in 1070 and forcing him to promise the payment of a large annual tribute to the Islamic State. M. Sedillot quite rightly says in his *Histoire des Arabes* that Alp Arslān "ruled over a large part of the Asiatic continent and commanded two hundred thousand warriors under his banner. Still, in spite of his

eminence, it cannot be said that Alp Arslān was the greatest ruler of the line, for this place is really reserved for his son and successor, Sultan Malik Shāh who ruled from 1074 to 1092. This king doubled the number of mosques and educational institutions of Baghdād, and conveyance between the various parts of the Empire was facilitated by the construction of new roads and canals. His name was mentioned in Friday sermons from Mecca to Baghdād and from Isfahān to Kāshghar, and he annexed all the parts of Asia Minor to his dominions right up to the Mediterranean coast."

Early Life.—It was in the reign of these two potentates that the great empire was really governed by one of the greatest men of the century, Khwājā Abū 'Alī Ḥasan b. 'Alī b. Ishāq, better known in history as Nizāmu'l-Mulk Ṭūsī, was born at Nūqān, a suburb of Ṭūs, in 1017. It is related that when he was at school he had as his fellow-students two boys who later became two of the most prominent men of his time, the great poet and savant of Persia, 'Umar Khayyām, and the founder of the Bāṭiniyah sect of the Ḥashshāshīn or the *Assassins*, Ḥasan b. Šabbāḥ el-Ḥumairī el-Qummī, one of whose followers, Abū Ṭāhir Ḥārīṣ, murdered the Khwājā in 1092. The Khwājā was first appointed a *kātib* or writer by Alp Arslān's father, Chaghri Beg Dāwūd; after that

he rose step by step till he became Joint-Minister and, after the death of Ḥamīdu'l-Mulk, was appointed the Chief Minister of the Seljūqī realm. During his term of office he was showered with all kinds of honorific titles and dignities both by his masters, Alp Arslān and Malik Shāh, and by the Caliph of Baghdād, al-Qāim, so that he became, in course of time, Wazīr-i Kabīr, Khwājā-i Buzurg, Tāju'l-Ḥaḍrataīn, Qiwāmu'd-dīn, Nizāmu'l-Mulk, 'Atābēg, Rāḍiu Amīru'l-Mu'minīn, al-Wazīru'l-'Alīmu'l-'Ādil, and as if all these high sounding titles would not suffice to connote the qualities of the man, the great divine of the period, Imāmu'l-Ḥaramain Shaikh 'Abdu'l-Malik al-Juwainī, added the distinctions of Sayyidu'l-Warā, Muwayyidu'd-dīn, Mulāthu'l-Umam, Mus-takhdim li's-Saifi wa'l-Qalam to his laudatory epithets. A mere perusal of these titles gives us an idea of the great position which the Khwājā held in the eyes of his contemporaries. The reason for this exalted state is not far to seek, for not only was he the Prime Minister of the great realm which extended from the Oxus and the Jaxertes to the Bosphorus and was the power behind the throne of the Caliphate itself, but was far renowned as a man of learning and culture who actually put into writing the principles which he put into practice as a statesman, besides being God-fearing

and just in his very nature. It was he who laid the foundation of the Nizāmīyah University at Baghdād and established colleges in the far flung nerve-centres of the Empire such as Isfahān Nishāpūr, Merv, Mōṣal, Hirāt, Baṣrah and Tūs as feeders for that seat of learning.

Among the works attributed to him are two treatises on politics, i.e., the *Siyāsat Nāmah* or *Siyarū'l-Mulūk*, written mainly for the guidance of Sulṭān Malik Shāh, and the *Majma'u'l-Waṣāyā* or *Dastūru'l-Wuzārā* which he is said to have written for his son Fakhrū'l-Mulk. It is related that once Malik Shāh asked his nobles the real cause of the troubles under which the kingdom laboured, to which every one of note tried to give some kind of answer. Of course Nizāmu'l-Mulk was one of those to whom the query was addressed, and the reasoned reply he gave forms the *Siyāsat Nāmah* as we know it. When the work was placed before the King he read it thoroughly and declared that it would form the law of the constitution of the country in future.¹ The other work which has been mentioned, was probably the work seems really to have been compiled by someone for Fakhrū'd-dīn Ḥasan b. Tāju'd-dīn sometime about the fifteenth century. Although the technique of this work is more or less the

¹ 'Abdu'r-Razzāq : *Nizāmu'l-Mulk Tūsi* (Cawnpore, 1912), p. 198.

same as that of the *Siyāsat Nāmah*, and in both the works every principle of political conduct is substantiated and illustrated by a large number of anecdotes mainly taken from history and tradition—still the present trend of thought is that the work did not originate with Nizāmu'l-Mulk.

Historical Perspective.—Under these circumstances we shall content ourselves with analysing some of the principles enunciated in the *Siyāsat Nāmah* and try to give it a place in the field of political thought. Before attempting to deal with the work, however, it would be well to delineate the true perspective of the times of which the *Khawājā* was a product. We can appreciate his foresight, his erudition and his method of government to the fullest extent only when we bear in mind that he was a contemporary of William, the Conqueror of England; that when he was expounding his views, the seemingly interminable quarrels between the Pope and the Emperor were still going on, Sultān Maḥmūd of *Ghaznah* was still in the act of subjugating the land of Hindustān piecemeal, while there was hardly an Indian in the length and breadth of this great sub-continent who had embraced the faith of Islam; and it was only a few years before that 'Abdu'r-Raḥmān a'n-Nāṣir had laid the foundations of

the Caliphate of the West at Cordova. We cannot fully estimate the importance of Eastern sciences and arts in general till we are aware of the conditions prevalent in different parts of the world at the time which we happen to be scanning, and it is only then that the fullest importance of our own scientists and statesmen is brought into prominence.

His Method.—If it is possible to label the Khwājā's method with any particular epithet, it is that his method is, to a large extent, historical. We find that in nearly every case he proves the truth of a principle which he chooses to propound, on the touchstone of historical facts. Sometimes he states a comparatively simple idea but illustrates it with a series of facts covering a number of pages. Perhaps in order to save himself from arguing from the particular to the general, he gives illustrations of a principle of political conduct from the history of a number of countries. Thus when making the assertion that the king should make such persons his officers as are God-fearing and above temptation, he proves it by illustrations taken from the Qur'ān, the Traditions of the Apostle of Islam, the lives of Muslim saints and the history of Baghdād. Thus:

(1) It was the habit of Amīr 'Abdu'l-lāh b.

Ṭāhir that he invariably took God-fearing and pious men into his service, with the result that his subjects became happy and contented and his treasury was filled with lawful gold.

(2) It is stated in the Traditions that Justice is the cause of all worldly honours and of the power of the ruler, and in it lies all public and private good.

(3) It is said in the Holy Qur'ān that God is He who has sent His Book with truth and justice.

(4) Fuḍail b. 'Ayaḍ used to say that, if his prayers were of any avail, he would pray to the Almighty that He should favour him with a just ruler.¹

Not only does he illustrate his maxims with a reference to Islamic countries, but goes on to refer to non-Muslim lands as well, and his work is full of instances from the history of Persia and even of China. While discussing the importance of judiciary in the State he mentions that the rulers of ancient Persia used to hold a big *darbar* twice a year at which every complainant had a free access to the royal person, and whoever kept any one back was put to death. He goes on to say that this principle of impartiality in justice was held so sacred by the Persians that

¹ *Siyāsat Nāmāh*, p. 236.

even complaints against the king himself were heard by the Chief Justice with His Majesty appearing as the respondent.¹

Comparison with European Political Scientists.—The great difference between Nizāmu'l-Mulk and some of those Europeans who wrote on political science lies in the fact that Nizāmu'l-Mulk was himself a great and a successful administrator, while as a rule western political theorists have little actual experience of practical politics. Moreover it is often noticed that the government of the country of which these writers are citizens views their work with a certain amount of diffidence and even antipathy. One of the first Europeans to write on political matters was Plato; but the theories he has propounded are such that they can hardly ever be put in serious practice. Then comes Aristotle, who seems to argue from the constitutions of various City-States, but it must be remembered that the Greece of the City-States was already a thing of the past in his time, and Athens and Sparta had already disappeared as independent political entities before the might of Macedon. The case of subsequent European writers on Politics is not much different; the author of *Leviathan* is exiled, Rousseau ends his days in a far off land, 'unwept,

¹ *Siyāsat Nāmah*, p. 231.

unhonoured and unsung', and even after his death his countrymen treat his ashes with scant respect; and when Bentham seeks to influence his contemporaries by his novel theory of law, no one seems to take much notice of him. On the other hand, like most other political scientists of Asia, Khawājā Nizāmu'l-Mulk was himself a member of the government of the day, and while perusing his book we must bear in mind that whatever he has written has passed the acid test of experience as well as of deep historical research.

His Political Ideas.—Nizāmu'l-Mulk passes the whole machinery of administration under review, dealing with such varied subjects as the preparation of the Budget, the influence of women over government, the post office, embassies, regulation of weights and measures, entourage of the sovereign, titles, etc. First of all, however, let us see what the Khawājā has to say about the institution of kingship, which under various names survives as the centre of government in republican as well as monarchical States :

"God the Almighty selects someone from among men and gives over to him the charge of the well-being of the world and the comfort and tranquillity of the human race after duly furnishing him with the arts of government. He also

makes him responsible for the peace and security of the land and endows him with all the necessary *prestige* in order that God's creatures may live in peace and plenty and that justice and security may be the order of the day."¹

It is therefore quite clear that instead of having a blind belief in the royal prerogative, Niẓāmu'l-Mulk thinks that the basis and *raison d'être* of the kingly office is that it prevents the possibility of internal turmoil to a large extent and makes it possible for the subjects to live in peace and security. It would be interesting here to note *en passant* that this is the identical principle propounded by Bodin, Hobbes and other political scientists of Europe nearly seven hundred years after the compilation of the *Siyāsat Nāmah* when they stress the point that the sovereign should be endowed with full powers in order to save the country from troubles and turmoils.

But our author is equally clear that it should not be understood that a man becomes less responsible for his acts after he has been crowned king, as he should be working for the good of his people right up to the end of his days as the Sovereign and should remember that "God the Almighty is pleased with a king only when he treats his people with kindness and justice." In

¹ *Siyāsat Nāmah*, p. 200.

the same way he should make his officials treat those in their immediate charge likewise, extract only the legal dues from them, and be ever careful for the good of the State, for "Darius is said to have exclaimed just before his last gasp that the carelessness of the king and the dishonesty of the minister were the real causes of the downfall of his Empire."¹ While passing in review the authority of the royal person, our author discusses the position of the 'King's Friends,' and quotes from the saying of the saint Sufiyān-i-Ṣūrī that the best of kings is he who keeps company with the learned and the worst of the learned is he who keeps company with the kings.² Apart from the law of Islam which was current in the land, the king was empowered to issue proclamations according to the needs of the moment, and of these the *Khwājā* says that if it is known that there is someone who treats these proclamations with disrespect or hesitates to act according to them, he should be punished forthwith whether he be a prince of the royal blood or a mere commoner."³ But at the same time he warns the king that he should not base these proclamations on his personal whim but should issue them after duly consulting those well known

¹ *Siyāsat Nāmah*, p. 219.² *Ibid.*, p. 251.³ *Ibid.*, p. 282.

for their experience, sound views and common-sense. He should always take care that his officials are doing their duty with diligence and should depose them the moment their dishonesty and carelessness are known to him. Taking all these ideas into consideration he lays down that a ruler should never appoint members of his entourage to high posts in the State nor force high officers of the Crown to be his private companions. He should remember that capable officers are a great boon to the State and that "the wise have said that a worthy servant and an able slave rank superior even to one's own sons."¹ We know that indolent or dishonest officials lead a country to utter ruin, however well-meaning and sympathetic the ruler himself might be; while, on the other hand, if the State officials are honest and mean to perform their duty well, they are bound to improve the lot of the people, in spite of the incapacity and possible immorality of the ruler.

State Officials.—He lays down a general rule that whether the term of the districts has been let out after auction or not, the officer in charge of the collection of revenue should not be allowed to collect a pie more than is due from the tenants, while the tenants should be allowed free

¹ *Siyāsat Nāmāh*, p. 295.

access to the Royal Person. Collectors should know fully well that both they and their master the king are there solely for the welfare of the subjects, and the ruler should dismiss them when they are seen to budge an inch from the correct behaviour.¹ In any case he recommends that such officials should not be in charge of any district for more than three years so that they may not feel too safe and thereby become too independent. He says that the duties of a judge are perhaps the most important in the State, and only such persons should be appointed to the office who should be well-versed in the Law and whose integrity should be absolutely above suspicion, while an appeal should lie to from the lower to the higher courts especially when a case has been decided wrongly owing to some kind of misunderstanding or corruption. The executive officials should always extend their helping hand to the judiciary and see that their decisions are properly executed.²

Ambassadors.—We are struck by the great modernity of the *Khawājā* when we read what he has to say about foreign representatives, for he writes as if he were writing to-day in a western country in our own time :

“We must remember that the real object of

¹ *Siyāsāt Nāmah*, p. 216.

² *Ibid.*, p. 278.

foreign envoys is not only that they should convey messages from their governments but, if we were to look deeply into their purpose, a number of secret objects, for they wish to know the exact position and condition of the roads, paths, valleys, canals and tanks, whether they are fit for the passage of troops, and whether fodder is available anywhere near them. They also seek to know something about the ruler of the country and the exact state of the army and other equipments, the feelings of the soldiers as well as of the common people, and all about the wealth of the subjects and the comparative population of the different districts. They try to penetrate into the working of the government of the country and to know whether the ministers are honest or dishonest and whether the generals are experienced or not. The real object of all these investigations is that, if it were the programme of their native country to fight the country to which they have been accredited, or to occupy it, then all this information might prove helpful to their country".¹

Nizāmu'l-Mulk goes on to discuss the question of espionage and says that what the ambassadors are to the countries to which they are sent, spies are to the departments to which they are secretly

¹ *Siyāsat Nāmah*, p. 287.

appointed. Even to-day we are aware of the activities of the so-called Fifth Columns in every country worth the name, and it is almost an axiom in the science of administration that it is not possible to know the real condition of popular opinion without some kind of secret service in the country. Even such a useful institution as the Post Office had its origin in the system of espionage, for it was the postal department which used to be the channel of an efficient secret service in almost all the well-governed States of the world. But Nizāmu'l-Mulk goes much further in order to demonstrate the utility of the system, for he says that, "whenever a ruler gives the charge of an important office to somebody, he should appoint another person unknown to that official to be always at his side in order that he might be able to inform him as to how that official is doing his work," and advises the spies to "dress themselves as merchants, travellers, sūfis and chemists," so that they might be able to come into direct contact with all and sundry. He says that the greatest benefit which the State draws from this department is that the executive head keeps himself informed of the conduct of his officials, so that he can immediately put an end to any evil which may arise in the proper working of the various departments.¹

¹ *Siyāsat Nāmah*, p. 262.

It is interesting to note how Nizāmu'l-Mulk views and justifies the existence of a department which was, in those days, perhaps one of the most useful in the State, but which is made to do so much dirty work in most of the modern States.

Dastūru'l-Wuzarā.—The second work on Politics, the *Dastūru'l-Wuzarā*, is supposed to be the admonition to his son never to accept the office of the wazīr, for it is fraught with great difficulties and pitfalls. It would be interesting and instructive to deal here with the second part of the treatise where he enumerates the functions and duties of a minister. He says that a minister should defend the dictates of God, act in accordance with the orders of the sovereign, have due regard for those who are in daily communion with his master as well as for the people of the kingdom. He advises the future minister to test even the smallest action of his on the touchstone of his own common-sense and ever to remain a man of strong character, just conscience and truth, for without these noble qualities he will never prove to be a well-wisher of his master and his country. In dealing with the desiderata of a minister the author lays a great stress on the science of history, and makes it perfectly clear that it has a close relation to the science of statecraft. He puts his philosophy of history in a nutshell when he says

that in this world of causes and consequences we shall be right in surmising that if the same set of circumstances recurs the same consequences will follow. Finally the author advises the future minister to have special regard for the men of the sword without whom no throne can be stable, and the men of the pen without whom no ministry can be successful.¹

An Estimate.—Here in a limited compass it is not possible to discuss all the principles mentioned in Nizāmu'l-Mulk's political heritage or the profuse illustrations on which these principles are based. Moreover it must be left to others to discuss which parts of the book are from the pen of the *Khwājā* and which are spurious. It is sufficient for our purpose to know that most of the ideas contained in the *Siyāsat Nāmah* come from the famous prime minister of the Seljūqids and are the ones accepted by his master Jalālu'd-dīn Abu'l-Faṭḥ Malik Shāh as the constitutional code of his extensive empire. It must be remembered that the book was compiled nearly a thousand years ago, when the Abbasid edifice was tottering, the days of the Eastern Empire of Constantinople were nearing their end, and India was suffering from internal dissensions, the ailment of the caste-system and the threats of a permanent conquest

¹ *Das̱tūru'l-Wuzarā*, pp. 339 ff.

by outsiders. It is to the great credit of Nizāmu'l-Mulk that in that dark and uncertain epoch he sat down to write a book which was as useful to a seeker of political truth in our own times as it was to his contemporaries. As has been said above he freely takes his cue from non-Arabic and non-Muslim sources. In fact he marks an epoch in the history of Eastern learning and action, for he was an expert in the arts and sciences of his day, a faithful counsellor of his patron and his eminent son, a friend of the great Persian astronomer-poet, the *Ṣūfī* 'Umar-i *Khayyām*, the founder of the Nizāmiyah University and its branches, and a martyr at the hand of a religious fanatic; in a word he rose to such eminence that the whole continent of Asia may well take a pride in his personality and his work.

Comparisons.—The great difference between Māwardī and Kaikā'ūs consist in the fact that although they were contemporary writers, one was nearly always looking back on religious precepts and towards the south, while the other was influenced more by his own environments with his eyes towards the east; one was an academic and an idealist, the other a statesman; one addressed the whole world while the object of the other was to make his own son successful in life; one's main source of inspiration was the authoritative

Traditions of Islam while the other drew on all kinds of stories current in his own day. Māwardī died barely thirty-five years before Nizāmu'l-Mulk's death while Amīr Kaikā'ūs was born four years before the Seljūqī minister's birth and died ten years after his martyrdom, so that both our authors compiled their works in his lifetime. When we peruse the political writings of Nizāmu'l-Mulk we would find that he sometimes addressed his sovereign, at other times his own son, while he bases his arguments both on the early history of Islam like Māwardī, and on the history of the Turks, the Īrānians and other nations like Amīr Kaikā'ūs. As a matter of fact Māwardī, Kaikā'ūs and Nizāmu'l-Mulk all demonstrate the conflict that was going on between the Arabian and the non-Arabian cultures in the eleventh century A.C. which was to end finally in the comparative downfall of the former at least in its outward manifestations.

Chapter 6

GHAZZĀLĪ (1058-1111)

Tūs.—It is said that the great poet Firdausī, the millenary of whom was celebrated in Īrān with great éclat some years ago, was born in a village named Shādāb, meaning *fertile*, in the district of Tūs in Northern Īrān; it is not for us to discuss here whether the author of the *Shāh Nāmāh* was or was not born there, but there is no doubt that the district which produced Firdausī was one of the most fertile districts of Īrān in that it produced a vast number of intellectual giants within a comparatively short space of time. The town of Tūs is now practically a heap of ruins, having given place to the more renowned Meshhed close by, the burial place of the eighth apostolic Imām, 'Alī e'r-Riḍā and of the well-known Abbasid Khalīfah Hārūnū'r-Rashīd, but the names and work of the *savant* which the district produced will live for ever. The list of eminent men who were born there would be too long for our purpose; suffice it to say that besides Firdausī it includes such names as that

of the political writer and statesman Nizāmu'l-Mulk, of the mathematician and ethical writer Naṣīru'd-dīn, of the legist Abū Ja'far and finally that of Ghazzālī.

Ghazzālī's Life.—Abū Hāmid Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad, surnamed al-Imāmu'l-Jalīl, Ḥujjatu'l-Islām and Zainu'd-dīn¹ was born at Ghazzālā near Ṭūs in 450/1058 more than a hundred years after Firdausī's and about forty years after Nizāmu'l-Mulk's birth,² and in the short fifty-five lunar years of his life made a mark on erudite thought such as has been the lot of few men in the history of the world. He was educated at Ṭūs proper in the beginning, moving to Jurjān later on, migrating finally to Nishāpūr to sit at the feet of perhaps the most learned man of his time, Abū'l-Ma'ālī Muḥammad al-Juwainī Imāmu'l-Ḥaramain, who had recently been invited back from the Ḥijāz to preside over one of the great colleges founded by Nizāmu'l-Mulk. He was first the pupil and then the assistant of the Imām till the latter's death in 478/1085. He was then called to the court of Nizāmu'l-Mulk while still in his teens, remaining as his intellectual adviser and chief canonist till 484/1091 when he was

¹ 'The Great Leader, Proof of Islam, Ornament of the Faith.'

² Firdausī born about 329/940; Nizāmu'l-Mulk born, 408/1017.

appointed to the great foundation at Baghdād. It is related that while at Baghdād Ghazzālī lectured before audiences of three hundred, sometimes even five hundred great lawyers and learned men of his day to their entire satisfaction.

Baghdād did not see very much of Ghazzālī and it seems that deep thought, coupled with the murder of his patron Nizāmu'l-Mulk and the death of Malik Shāh¹—all these things had a tremendous effect on his psychology. He left Baghdād, going first to Syria, then to Egypt, Mecca and Medīna, wandering here and there for well nigh a dozen years. Politics had taken a serious turn during these years. Malik Shāh was succeeded by his youngest son, Maḥmūd, who was in turn succeeded by his eldest brother Barkiyārūq, while another of Malik Shāh's sons, Sanjar,² governor of Khurāsān, made Nizāmu'l-Mulk's son Fakhru'l-Mulk his chief minister, and he, true to the traditions of his illustrious father, invited Ghazzālī back to his country making him the president of his *alma-mater*, the academy at Nishāpūr in 499/1105. But he was no more at home with the hubbub of a busy city life, finally retiring to Tūs and founding a Khānqāh and a private school there. The master

¹ 485/1092.

² Later, Seljūqī Sultāns.

died on 14-5-505/19-12-1111.¹

Political Background.—It has already been recounted elsewhere² that this epoch was a turning-point in the history of Western Asia. The pontifical successor of the Apostle of Islam was still on the throne of Baghdād, but this throne had none of the magnificence of Hārūn's or Māmūn's days, and it had been shorn of all worldly power which should have been the right of the successors of es-Saffāh. The period of Ghazzālī's life is covered by the reigns of 'Abdu'l-lāh Abū Ja'far *al-Qāim* bi Amr'il-lāh.³ 'Abdu'l-lāh Abū'l-Qāsim *al-Muqtadir* bi Amr'il-lāh⁴ and Aḥmad Abū'l-'Abbās *al-Mustazhir* bi'l-lāh.⁵ But as has been stated above, these *Khalifās* had become mere puppets in the hands of the Seljūqī Sultāns and had been forced to give all worldly power and authority in their hands. Īrān and the adjacent countries were ruled directly by the Seljūqīs right through Ghazzālī's life. He was

¹ See *Subḥī, Tabaqāt*, IV, pp. 101 ff., where his works are described as well as fully criticised, and a complete list of such Apostolic Traditions mentioned by Ghazzālī given as are not regarded as authoritative. Also see Ghazzālī's letters (edited by Sir Syed Aḥmad Khān, Akbarābād, 1310 H.) where we can have an insight into the inner mind of the master in the evening of his life, and his fearless enunciation of the principles which he held dear even when writing to the Sultān or his ministers. It is a delight to read these communications.

² See chapter on Nizāmu'l-Mulk Tūsī.

³ 422/1031-467/1075.

⁴ 467/1075-487/1094.

⁵ 487/1094-512/1118.

born during the reign of Ruknu'd-dīn Abū Tālib Tughral Bēg,¹ lived through the time of 'Aḍdu'd-dīn Abū Shuja' Alp Arslān², Jalālu'd-dīn Abū'l-Fath Malik Shāh³, Nāṣiru'd-dīn Maḥmūd⁴ and Ruknu'd-dīn Abū'l-Muẓaffar Bārkiyārūq,⁵ dying in the reign of Ghīyaṣu'd-dīn Abū Shuja' Muḥammad.⁶ The days of his study and authorship were taken up by civil wars among the claimants to the Seljūqī throne after the death of Malik Shāh, instigated by the sons of Niẓāmu'l-Mulk named Fakhrū'l-Mulk and Muwayyidu'l-Mulk, a civil war which continued for years and which ended in a kind of political paralysis in the Seljūqī dominion, its division in a small number of States and its final disruption soon after Ghazzālī's death. In fact the end was visible in the time of Barkiyārūq himself when only the central portion of what was once an all-pervading empire had been left to the Sultān.

Political Machinery of the Seljūqīs.—Here it will be well to give a short account of the machinery of administration perfected by the wazīr, Niẓāmu'l-Mulk during the reign of his patrons. The highest governmental offices were five in number. "The foremost office was presided

¹ 429/1037-455/1063.

² 455/1063-465/1072.

³ 465/1072-485/1092.

⁴ 485/1092-487/1094.

⁵ 487/1094-498/1104.

⁶ 498/1104-511/1117.

over by the wazīr, the second by the Mustaufī (Accountant General), the third by the Tughrāī, the fourth by the Mushrif and the fifth by the 'Āriḍu'l-Jaish (Controller-General of the Army). These offices have different names to those current in the time of the early Abbasids, the office of the Mustaufī corresponding to the Dīwānu'z-zimām, that of the Tughrāī to the Dīwānu'r-Rasāil wa'l-Inshā and that of the 'Āriḍu'l-Jaish to the Dīwānu'l-Jaish wa'sh-Shākiriyyah. Compare Von Kremer, *Culturgeschichte des Orients*, I, 198 ff. As regards the Dīwānu'l-Mushrif, it seems to have been a part of the ministry of finance like the Dīwānu'l-Mustaufī. These names, however, convey only a vague and hazy idea of the duties of these officers. Thus the word Tughrāī signifies one who applies the *tugh*rā or the Turkish seal on the ordinances of the Sulṭān, but his office was really the Chancellery of the empire . . . and its chief took the place of the wazīr when the king was out hunting . . . Entering the service as a simple *kātib* or clerk, and having seen service in subordinate offices, one was appointed the 'Āriḍu'l-Jaish and was promoted to the deputy Mushrifship and Mushrifship, finally rising step by step to the exalted office of the Grand Wazīr."¹

¹ *Histoire des Seljuicides d'Iraq*, par el-Bondari, d'après Imād ad-dīn,

Ghazzālī's Works on Politics.—It is necessary to bear the political background well in mind because Ghazzālī's political writings have a constant reference to them. His *Munqith Mina'd-Dalāl* ("Deliverance from Waywardness")¹ is really the exposition of the psychological revolutions which took place within him finally culmination in his great work the *Ihyāu'l-Ulūm* ("Renaissance of Sciences"),² which he completed during his travels, revolutions which were synchronistic with the political turmoil which converted a world-wide empire into a petty west-central Asiatic State. The *Tibru'l-Masbūk* ("Molten Gold"),³ a politico-ethical hand-book for royal guidance, was meant for Ghiyāsu'd-dīn Abū Shuja' Muḥammad, son of his patron Malik Shāh. In the same way, although it is related in the introduction of another work the *Sirru'l-'Alamain* ("The Mystery of the Two Worlds") that the book was written at the instance of "a number of the kings of the earth in order that I might compose an unrivalled work to facilitate the fulfilment of their

al-Kātib al-Isfāhānī, ed. Houtsma, preface, pp. viii ff. Also Arabic text of the same, *Tawārikh Āl-i Seljūq*, Leiden, 1889, p. 100.

¹ I'lāmiyah Press, Cairo, 1303 H.

² Maimaniyah Press, Cairo, 1306 H., 4 Vols.

³ Ed. el-Ḥamzāvi, Kastāliyah Press. 1277 H. It is asserted by some that the *Tibṛ.* and the *Sirr.* are really from another pen.

ambitions,"¹ there was much of the local colour in it, and it is addressed not to 'kings' in the plural number but to 'O king' and 'O ruler,' so that we might rightly conclude that it was really meant for the edification of the ruler of his native country more than any one else. Besides these works which form an infinitesimal part of the labours of the Imām, his political thought is interspersed in a number of other works, such as the *Fātiḥatu'l-'Ulūm* ("Introduction to Sciences"),² containing the division of sciences into different branches and their definitions, the *Kīmiyā-i-Sa'ādat* ("Alchemy of Goodness"),³ which is meant to be a precis of the *Iḥyā*, the *Iqtisād fi'l-I'tiqād* ("Moderation in Belief")⁴ on the basis of the royal prestige, and *Kitābu'l-Wajīz*,⁵ a handbook on *Fiqh* or canon law, while references to the political aspect of human life are too numerous to be recounted here.⁶

Contemporary Political Thought in Europe.—Before going on to Ghazzālī's actual political

¹ *Sirr.*, p. 2.

² Ḥusainīyah Press, Cairo, 1322 H.

³ The edition used by me is the Bombay edition of 1314 H. There is an English translation by H. A. Homes printed in New York, where the name of the work is wrongly rendered as the *Alchemy of Happiness*.

⁴ Adabiyah Press, Cairo.

⁵ Cairo, 1317 H.

⁶ Here we have limited ourselves to more compact references to Politics and to his more prominent doctrines, which are sometimes repeated in his works. Ghazzālī's works have been computed to nearly 70 volumes of various sizes. See *Makātibat*, p. 7.

teachings it will be well to give an outline of the state of contemporary European thought in the West in order to form a correct perspective of his general political outlook. We are now somewhere about the end of the eleventh and the beginning of the twelfth century of the Christian era, a period which is dubbed by one of the greatest of modern political scientists as "essentially unpolitical,"¹ and the sole question which interested the European peoples seems to have been the eternal controversy between the Pope and the Emperor. The battle of Hastings had just been fought, the Capetian dynasty set up in France not so very long ago, and Frederick II, who was later to try and avenge the honour of the empire was yet unborn; in fact the only light which brightened the European firmament shone from Muslim Spain. Political thought had almost ceased to exist with the disappearance of a free Hellas while Rome had done little besides making that thought her own through translations and adaptations, and it was more than a hundred years before even such embryonic political philosophy such as that of Aquinas² and Dante³ could take shape, both of whom indulged in the controversy between the

¹ Bryce, quoted in Pollock, *History of the Science of Politics*.

² Dunning, *Political Theories, Ancient and Medieval*, ch. VIII.

³ *Ibid.*, ch. IX.

Church and State with almost childlike gusto and applied arguments which would have seemed petty to a contemporary Easterner.¹

Perception versus Experience.—Coming back to al-Ghazzālī, we find that the central pivot of all his philosophical argument is that he replaces the rule of intellectual perception by personal human experience, and rank materialism by spiritual elation. He was against the incursion of semi-Hellenistic trend of thought, and was by nature a sceptic, carving a way out for himself and paying little heed to the accepted doctrines of his age.² He is thus regarded as a *mujaddid* or 'reviver,' and *Imām* or 'leader' by millions of Muslims to-day, for he combated the paganistic trend of his day and was the torch-bearer of rationalistic Muslim renaissance. "The equal of Augustine in philosophical and theological importance, by his side the Aristotelean philosophers of Islam, Ibn Rushd and all the rest, seem beggarly compilers and scholiasts."³ Even when he was barely 20, he

¹ Thus Dante, while trying to prove the omnipotence of the Holy Roman Empire argues that as old Rome was competent to pass judgment on Christ who represented all mankind, so Rome's successor, the Empire, proceeds directly from God without Pope's mediation. See Pollock, *op. cit.*

² See *Munqith*, p. 4. "تحرك باطنى الى طلب الحقيقة الغطرة"
"الاصلية وحقيقة العقائد العارضة بتقليد الوالدين والاستاذين"

³ D. B. MacDonald, *Muslim Theology, Jurisprudence and Constitutional Law*, Scribner, N. Y., 1903, ch. IV.

began to ponder over the problems of life and death, becoming an absolute sceptic while, with Nizāmu'l-Mulk, doubting his own senses and even his mental faculties and thus rejecting intellectual perception as the criterion of truth. He thus retraced his steps to the only criterion left for him, *i.e.*, his personal experience and the experience of those who had gone before him and whom he regarded as trustworthy. His ethics, his way of life, his outlook of the things round him, began to be dictated by the writings and sayings of prophets, saints and savants in whom he pinned his faith. Thinking about the problem of life and death more deeply, he clearly perceived the hollowness of the worldly life and the eternity that was in store after death.¹ As is natural with a mind like this, and in common with the great writers of his age, he gives a great importance to historical learning, the Traditions of the Apostle of Islam, the history of the Islamic peoples and the stories current in those days about Persia and Greece, especially the Greece of the Alexandrine epoch. So far as political theory and practice is concerned, he is clear that Politics are a necessary adjunct to one's life and are closely allied to Ethics, a science which leads to the good of man. But

¹ These mental evolutions are set down in the *Munqith* with great fidelity.

he is also perfectly clear that whatever rule of conduct may be set up for man's life in this world, it must necessarily be for a very short space of time, and should, in any case, be taken as the means for the edification and completion of life in order that man may be able to prepare himself for the life hereafter with greater diligence and concentration. Here it must be borne in mind that he insists on the happy means of conduct which would lead to the betterment of the human race, and refers to the belief of the Apostle of Islam that a man should not leave off this world nor should he entirely curb his worldly desires, but instead of this, he should find out the real object of everything of this world and should act always in such a way as to have the limited utility of the action in his mind.¹

'*Mundane*' and '*Celestial*.'—It is necessary to bear this in mind as it is generally thought that Ghazzālī's sphere is that of spirituality only and he has nothing to do with mundane affairs. As a matter of fact he clearly says that God has made this world "a place for work and labour," and quotes the Apostle of Islam, who, beholding a working man, remarked that if he was working to keep himself from begging, or in order to support his aged parents and young children, he was doing

¹ *Iḥyā*. III, 6, v.

something to please the Almighty, while if he was working to compete with others in their wealth and be proud of it, then he would only please the Devil.¹ He also quotes the Apostle admonishing his companions to take to trade and commerce, for in it are said to be nine out of every ten parts of our nourishment.² He goes on to quote the saint, Ibrāhīm Nakḥafī who preferred a truth-telling trader to a hermit, and the saint Sulaimān Durrānī who admonished his friends to prepare their food before offering their prayers.³ In another remarkable sentence Ghazzālī interprets the Apostolic precept طلب العلم فريضة على كل مسلم و مسلمة to mean that it is the duty of every man and woman who carry on a profession to gather knowledge about that profession in order that they might keep away from all possibility of wrong.⁴ Still, one must have an eye to the fact that this world is merely a passing show, the first home in which is the mother's womb and the last the pit of the grave, so that it is incumbent on one to live a life of purity and cleanliness to whatever station in society he might belong.⁵ He says that the word 'worldliness' has two distinct connotations; one of the meanings attached to it being that the person who indulges in it leads a luxurious

¹ *Iḥyā*, II, 1, i, quoting a tradition by Abū Dāwūd and Aḥmad.

² *Iḥyā*, II, 1, i.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*, II, 1, ii.

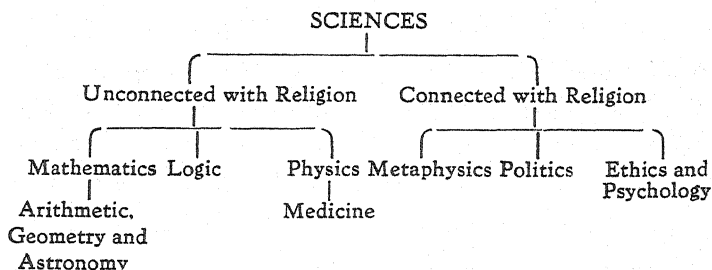
⁵ *Tibr.*, p. 26.

and abundant life and is in the habit of increasing his means to much more than he really wants, while in the other case he is content if he is able to get means of his sustenance. The two connotations are really quite distinct to one another, and Ghazzālī is of opinion that while the first is the very negation of religion, the second is its complement, and without its proper organisation and working man cannot seek even his celestial happiness, for if there is political turmoil in the land entailing in a lack of law and order there would be no peace of mind to serve the Almighty according to His dictates.¹

Division of Sciences.—We now come to his enunciation of the political theory and a detailed justification of the organisation of the people into a body-politic. Ghazzālī leaves no stone unturned to explain this in its purest form and to describe his way of political conduct in all its explicitness. His views on Politics are interspersed in a number of his writings, and over and above that, he has devoted independent works to this science, which shows the importance which he credited to this branch of human life. In the first place he gives the science of Politics a proper place in the general scheme of the Sciences, which he divides

¹ *Al-Iqtisād fi'l-'Iṭiqād*, p. 105.

as follows :¹



This division may not be complete from our point of view, but viewed from the criterion laid down by Ghazzālī about connection with religion, it is by no means illogical.² The remarkable thing is that, writing as he does in the early part of the twelfth century, when the West had not even begun to probe into the niceties of political implications, he has the courage and the breadth of vision to include Political Science as one of the chief sciences. He defines Politics as a science "which deals with the proper order for the State affairs of the mundane category,"³ a definition which is as modern as any definition can be. He

¹ *Munqith*, p. 13. Also see *Fatīḥātu'l-'Ulūm*, Cairo, 1322 H., chapters IV, V, where the place of law and politics and the relation of sciences which deal with man as a person, with those which deal with man as a member of a society, is indicated in great detail. Also see Ibn Abī'r-Rābī's division of sciences, above, ch. III.

² Pollock, ch. I, has given us a division of sciences, and this corresponds with Ghazzālī's division in its basic principles to a remarkable extent.

³ *Munqith*, p. 17.

goes on to say that "it is derived from God's books as revealed to the prophets or from the orders of the saintly persons in the days of yore."¹ This perhaps requires a little explanation. We have mentioned above that Ghazzālī's whole theory rests on the efficacy of past experience, the highest form of which is the experience derived from Divine words. Moreover it must be remembered that in those far off days the sole impetus to the political awakening of the people had come from the teachings of the Apostle of Islam and his successors, and it should not surprise us that Ghazzālī should base his theory mostly upon the precedents set up by the élites of God Himself.²

Development of the State-idea.—Ghazzālī's enunciation of the necessity of the State is so remarkable and so entirely modern that it would be better to reproduce it here almost verbatim. "Man is created in such a manner that he cannot live all by himself but is in constant need of others, wishing that someone else, human like himself, should always be with him. He needs this company for two reasons, firstly for the sake of procreation, for this is impossible without

¹ *Munqith*, p. 17.

² As has been mentioned under Māwardī, this doctrine of basing Law and Politics on God's word kept on in Europe for centuries, and is actually found in Year-Book, 34 Hen. VI, 50 (1356 A.C.) quoted in Holland, *Jurisprudence*, p. 64.

sexual intercourse with a person of the opposite sex, and secondly that he might be helped in the preparation of his effects, food, clothing and proper education and bringing up of his children. Sexual intercourse results in the birth of offsprings, and it is naturally not possible for a person to shut himself up with his wife and children, for this would make life a burden to him. It is therefore in the nature of things that there should be co-operation with a very large number of persons each of whom should indulge in a certain trade or industry. Then again these traders or handicraftsmen cannot be independent of each other; for instance it is impossible for the tiller to till his land independently of others, for he would need instruments of agriculture entailing in the services of carpenters and blacksmiths, while the preparation of food would necessitate the work of the grinder and the cook All this goes to prove that man cannot live alone but wants others' help at every step."¹ Then again it is necessary to build houses to withstand the elements of nature, and the need for protection against external intruders would make people live together and build walls round their joint habitation. "This means the establishment of cities,² and it is in the

¹ This and other extracts in this paragraph are taken from *Iḥyā* III, 6, v.

² *Bilad*, from *beled*; Greek, *polis*, City or State.

nature of human conduct that when men live together and deal with one another a certain amount of squabbles and quarrels necessarily follow, . . . and if they were left to their lot they would destroy each other by continuous feuds and wars."¹ Moreover there are some who are too ill to work, and it is necessary that they should be looked after. Now if *all* were to be given charge of cases like these, then no one will be really personally responsible for anyone's welfare.² Under these circumstances a number of new arts and industries spring up, *e.g.*, measurement in order to ascertain the amount of land in dispute, warfare and arms in order to save the city from intruders, Fiqh or canon law in order to organise the people and make everyone keep within proper bounds, and lastly, 'arbitration and Government in order to deal with quarrels and feuds'. "All these things are necessary for the political well-being of the people and each of them requires the superintendence of men of special qualities who should have attained a certain amount of knowledge, discretion and power of guidance

¹ Compare the theories of the Englishman, Hobbes and the Frenchman, Rousseau about the warring elements in a condition of pre-state. Both wrote centuries after Ghazzālī. The great difference lies in the fact that Ghazzālī does not indulge in the fanciful theories of the Social Contract.

² This is one of the arguments adopted by Aristotle to combat Plato's theory of communism. See his *Politics*, Jowett's tr., II, 5.

It is natural that when they would be busy in their task they would not be able to indulge in other occupations, and it should be borne in mind that they, like all others want their daily bread.”¹

So far as financial arrangements are concerned, Ghazzālī is quite explicit that there should be a Collector of revenue who should make the collections ‘with leniency and justice’, an Assessor who should ascertain the amount of revenue, a Treasurer who should have charge of the revenues collected, and a Paymaster who should disburse the amounts sanctioned. He says that it is of the utmost importance that a “King or Amīr” should be at the helm of affairs who should be able to make ‘appointments to all these offices, to see that justice is done in financial matters, send armies to the fields of war, distribute arms among his soldiers and appoint commanders to lead them. There are a number of other duties to be performed such as the defence of the country, appointment of clerks, writers, magistrates and treasurers and the fixing of their emoluments. He goes on to divide the population of a country into (i) farmers, husbandsmen, and handicraftsmen, (ii) men of the sword, and (iii) those who

¹ This is the Hellenistic ideal. In independent Greek States the citizen's only concern was politics and warfare, while the rest of the work was done by other freemen and slaves.

take money from the first grade in order to distribute among the second, whom he calls the Men of the Pen. After this he propounds some extremely modern theories of economic exchange and proves the immense superiority of a fixed currency on the old system of barter, going on to the importance of the mobility of commodities in internal and external trade, and then to coinage, bimettalism and trimettalism.¹

Apart from this, Ghazzālī gives another reason for the establishment of kingship. He says that it is impossible to have a permanent organisation of worldly affairs without a ruler or a Sultān, and as without such an organisation it would be impossible to act according to Divine commandments with peace and order, such political organisation has the sanction of the Law of Islam. He says that without a ruler to whom the people should habitually be obedient, there would be "continuous turmoil, a never-ending clanging of the swords, a recurring state of famine and cattle diseases and an end to all industries and handicraft." Further, it is natural that men should be divided in different ranks and grades with mental contrasts and varieties in individual opinions, so that it is of the utmost necessity that a strong ruler should sit on the helm of affairs

¹ *Iḥyā*, III, 6, v.

and keep the body politic properly organised under his control.¹

One is amazed to find the great modernity of the arguments propounded in this synthesis of the State-idea, and it is refreshing to note that after accepting the Aristotelean doctrine of the social nature of Man, Ghazzālī, instead of falling on the dry heap of a patriarchal theory² faces blunt facts of human association and develops the idea little by little till he reaches the doctrine of Sovereignty with all its implications. Instead of the negativity of Hobbes, Ghazzālī adopts the positive method of arguing out facts, and while Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau and others deal with an imaginary man who really never existed at all, his Man is a living, honest, working man such as meets us every day of our lives. Interdependence, which is in the nature of human beings, is the basis of Ghazzālī's argument, and this entails a pivot, a centre of the whole machinery, in the shape of a sovereign. The Austinian theory of Sovereignty propounded nearly seven hundred years after Ghazzālī,³ was not such a great step forward, and if the Master had done nothing else than propound his theory

¹ *Iqtisād*, p. 106.

² See Aristotle, *Politics*, I, 1 and 2.

³ For the Austinian theory, see Sidgwick, *Elements of Politics*, App. A.

of the State, he would have deserved to be ranked in the forefront of the leaders of political thought.¹

State, Law, Constitution and Religion.—He indicates that there are two aspects of human conduct, individual and social, and it is only when man is regarded as a social being that the need of such sciences as Law and Politics arises. He is precise with regard to the distinction between Law, which deals with the relation among individuals for the settlement of their disputes, and between the Ruler and the People for fixing the criterion of the rule of justice. He says that if men were to exercise justice among themselves there would be no need for law and lawyers, but instead of that they are led away by their desires without regard for others' right of property and the right to live, with the result that it is necessary to have recourse to a system of Law, "a science which deals with human affairs, marriage and crimes",² and to a ruler who puts limits to their conduct according to the law in vogue.³

¹ European writers are incognisant of Ghazzālī's political thought. For example see Lord, *Principles of Politics*, preface, where the author is bold enough to assert that "the theory of politics is the peculiar product of Western thought."

² Ghazzālī, *Fatīḥatū'l-'Ulūm*, ch. IV.

³ See Locke, *Treatises on Civil Government*, Bk. II, ch. VII, where he comes very near Ghazzālī's argument in making life and property two of his main foundations of civil society. Locke wrote more than 700

“ Thus the *faqīh* is one learned in the law of the administration and he should know how to act as an intermediary between men who might indulge in quarrels; moreover (as one well-versed in Constitutional Law) he is the teacher of the ruler and his counsellor in matters of administrative importance.”¹ He goes on to indicate the exact relation between the State and religion and says that they are like twin sisters, religion being the foundation of human society and the ruler of the State its preserver, so that if the foundation weakens the whole structure would fall down, and if the ruler were to retire there would be no one to preserve the foundation.² Here the interdependence of the two greatest institutions of the social man has been made clear by the use of a simple metaphor, and an equilibrium has been struck which is thoroughly in keeping with the ideal practised in Ghazzālī’s days.

Biological Similes.—Among the modern notes in Ghazzālī there is one which reminds us of

years after Ghazzālī.

¹ *Fātiḥatu’l-’Ulūm*, ch. V. It should be noted here that Ghazzālī is perfectly clear about the importance of constitutional law and explicitly indicates its superiority over the ruler himself.

² *Ibid.*, p. 44. Hobbes, writing in the middle of the seventeenth century, prefaces his *Leviathan* with a picture, reproduced in the Clarendon Press edition, where the State-monster, the Leviathan, has a sword in one hand and an orb and a cross in the other!

Herbert Spencer when he likens the different elements of the State to the organs of a living body.¹ "Friend," he says, "you should consider the City as a physical Body, the professions as Limbs, the ordering magistrate its Desire, the police officer its Anger, the king its Heart and the minister its Common Sense. The king requires the assistance of all these organs to carry on the work of the State, but Desire, by which is meant the magistrate, sometimes indulges in falsehood and exaggeration and works against the dictates of Common Sense, the prime minister. This Desire wants to annex all there is in the State in the shape of revenue. The police officer, Anger, is very sharp and is of wayward habits, always wishing to kill, or at least wound others. The king is in the habit of consulting his minister and keeps recalcitrant magistrates under his control . . . It is only when the king, Heart, takes counsel with the minister, Common Sense, and controls Desire and Anger, making both subservient to Common Sense, then, and only then will the State be managed well . . . On the other hand, if Anger and Desire succeed in incarcerating Common Sense, then the whole Body Politic will be destroyed, and the king, Heart, will have to see a

¹ Herbert Spencer, *Principles of Sociology*, I, part 2.

very bad day.¹ It will be seen that these similes are, in a way, superior to those adopted by Herbert Spencer nearly a thousand years afterwards, for while the latter merely compares the Body Politic with the Body Physical, Ghazzālī, working under a religio-ethical spell derives ethical conclusions from the comparison and makes solid political capital out of it.

Ghazzālī's Method.—Except for analytical passages like this and the argument about the development of the State idea,² Ghazzālī mostly adopts the historical method along with so many of his contemporaries. Like Māwardī and Nizāmu'l-Mulk Tūsī, he gives numerous historical and traditional instances if he wishes to carry a point he has enunciated, but in contradistinction to Nizāmu'l-Mulk, he prefers to probe the truth mostly in the traditions of the Apostle of Islam, his companions and successors, and it is not often that he relies on Greek, Persian or Indian stories, although these are far more frequent with him than with his predecessor, el-Māwardī. He is not content with putting before his mind's eye the lessons of the days gone by, but actually admonishes the Seljūqī Sultān that he should "hear the sayings of the Kings, ponder over their doings, study their

¹ *Kimiyā*, Bombay ed., 1314 H., p. 7.

² *Ibid.*

stories as related in books and try to copy their acts of justice and benevolence.”¹

Justice.—It is the transitory condition of the world which Ghazzālī has in mind when he warns the sovereign that all worldly blessings come to an end at the time of death, and admonishes him to keep the thought of the Almighty and the orders of the Apostles uppermost in his mind, while at the same time making it absolutely clear that it is against Divine orders that one should be unjust or cruel to others, laying down the noble precept that while dealing with their subjects, kings should feel in the same way as they would wish others to treat them if they had been subjects instead of kings.²

The doctrine of Justice rightly takes a large amount of space in the works of Oriental political scientists. Ghazzālī says that in order to acquire the quality of being the shadow of God on earth with all its implications it is necessary that the person wronged should always be able to have his wrong righted,³ and quoted the Apostolic Tradition that on the Day of Judgment one of the seven sets of persons who should be allowed to enjoy the Shadow of the Divine Throne would be the set of the Kings who have done justice.⁴

¹ *Tibr.* p. 48.

³ *Sirr.*, Essay 1.

² *Ibid.*, beginning, ‘the King’s duties’, duty 2.

⁴ *Tibr.*, p. 10.

The ruler is the Viceroy of God only if he is just, otherwise he is the Viceroy of the Devil himself,¹ and one day of justice is equal to seventy years of continuous prayer.² He enumerates ten rules of the conduct of government, chiefly in the matter of justice, which the ruler should bear in mind, namely—

(i) In every case he should mentally put himself in the position of the contending parties.

(ii) He should fulfil the desire of those who have come to him for justice.

(iii) Justice is possible only when the ruler does not indulge in luxurious food and clothing.

(iv) He should practice leniency not harshness in his official dealings.

(v) He should try that the subjects should be content with the rule of Law; but

(vi) He should not attempt any conciliation at the expense of the Law.

(vii) He should supervise the affairs of the people in the same way as if he were to supervise his own household affairs and should deal with the powerful and the infirm in the same manner.

(viii) He should try to meet the learned as often as he can and should encourage them to have

¹ *Kimiyā*, element 2, base 10.

² *Tibr.*, p. 10; but comp. *Kimiyā*, el. 2, base 10, where the length of prayer indicated is sixty years.

their say.

(ix) He should see that his servants, magistrates and other officers, perform their duties diligently and well.

(x) He should not be overpowered by any false sense of pride.¹

He relates how the Khalīfah 'Umar b. 'Abdī'l-'Azīz asked the definition of justice from Muḥammad b. Ka'b of Cordova, to which the *savant* replied that real justice was dealing with the inferiors like a father, with superiors like a son and with equals like a brother and to award punishment only according to the wrong done and the power to bear it.² He quotes the Khalīfah 'Alī that the best judge is he who is not prejudiced in his decisions from personal desires, or by any leaning towards his relations, fear or hope, but takes a neutral attitude towards all that comes before him.³

It is this sense of perfect justice which makes Ghazzālī insist on the absolute neutrality of the ruler in all his acts or words. He should pay equal regard to everything great or small, to everybody high or low, noble or down-trodden, and should put down lawlessness with a stern

¹ These and other salutary principles are embodied in a chapter devoted to the art of government, the care of the subjects and kindred matter, in *Kīmīyā*, el. 2, base 10.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Tibr.*, p. 14.

hand.¹ He relates how someone once asked the great Sassanian minister, Buzurchimihr which of the kings were the greatest, to which he replied that those were the greatest who had the confidence of the good and were the terror of the wicked. He also mentions the story of Alexander the Great, who asked the learned men how he could better his lot, to which they replied that he should eradicate both undue likings and undesirable prejudice, he should not make any decision hurriedly without counsel and should shun all personal inclinations, likes and dislikes at the time of sitting in judgment over others.²

Duties and Functions of the Executive.—This brings us to the duties and functions of the executive arm of the government centred in the person of the king or *amīr*, and a whole book, the *Tibru'l-Masbūk*, is devoted to admonitions to the sovereigns who might care to peruse it. He enumerates the necessary qualities of an ideal ruler, and says that he should have intellect, knowledge, perception, correct proportion of things, chivalry, love for his subjects, diplomatic bend, foresight, strong will-power, and should be well-versed in the news of the day and the history of the kings who have passed away, while he should always see that his magistrates,

¹ *Tibr.*, p. 4.² *Ibid.*, p. 60.

secretaries, viceroys and other officers did their work well; it is chiefly in these qualities, he says, which go to make a ruler the Shadow of God on earth.¹ He relates how a learned man once told the great Khalifah, Hārūnu'r-Rashīd to beware that he was sitting where Abū Bakr once sat, demanding truthfulness, where 'Umar once sat, demanding differentiation between right and wrong, where 'Uṣmān once sat, demanding modesty and bounty, where 'Alī once sat, demanding knowledge and justice.² He puts forward the case of the Apostle of Islam, who himself fed his cattle, tied his camel, swept his house, milked his goat, sewed his shoe, patched his clothes, took meals with his servant, ground his own corn in time of need and did his own marketing.³

The Ruler's Daily Routine.—Ghazzālī goes even so far as to set down the daily routine of the ruler which might lead to his success in administration, giving the detail of his food and drink, and the hours of privacy and desk work which he considers necessary for him. After morning prayers he should go out riding in order to investigate any wrongs done to his subjects. He should then sit in court and allow all and sundry to have a

¹ *Tibr.*, p. 53.

² *Ibid.*, p. 15.

³ *Kimiyā*, el. 4, base 2, quoting a tradition handed down by Abū Sa'īd Khudrī.

direct access to him so that he might have a first hand knowledge of any complaints that might be made. He should make it a point of taking counsel from those excelling in knowledge, intelligence and experience and should himself give interviews to foreign envoys. A ruler should be well-versed in diplomacy and politics and should not be inclined to peace simply through timidity or fear of his enemies.¹ He warns the ruler against too much indulgence in drink, chess or hunting and says that the best system of life is couched in the maxim, 'Work while you work and play while you play.' He tells the ruler that the good kings of old used to divide their time in four parts, setting apart one for prayers, another for State affairs, justice and counsel of the learned about the affairs of the realm, the third for food and rest, and the last for recreation and hunting.² He is very particular that the ruler should not pay heed to the advice offered by women favourites, and quotes the instance of the Khalifah 'Umar who actually divorced his favourite wife when he was elected to his exalted office for fear of being influenced by her in State affairs.³ In another place he warns the ruler against the curse of a system of

¹ *Sirr.*, Essays 2 and 3.

² *Tibr.*, p. 58.

³ *Kāmiyā*, cl. 2, base 4.

favouritism,¹ and the only recommendations which he would allow are those where no exaggerated ideas are conveyed to the officer to whom the recommendation is taken, no lies told about the person recommended, the officer to whom the recommendation is made is not unduly praised and the person recommending does not desist from admonishing that officer for any false step he might be taking for any fear of disfavour.² We can well compare the system of recommendations which are the bane of certain governments of the present day with the very high ideal set up by the Master, and can well gauge the standard to which official life would be raised if these salutary principles were to be followed.

Heads of Revenue.—Ghazzālī is very clear about the taxation which can be legally levied and says that every bit that is collected beyond the amount allowed under the Law is absolutely *ultra vires*, regarding even such ordinary sources as fines and tribute from Muslim potentates as illegal. He goes so far as to say that an honest man who gets an emolument from the royal treasury should see that the amount paid to him does not come from such illegal heads, otherwise all his belongings

¹ *Tibr.*, Principles of Administration, pr., 10.

² *Kīmīyā* el. 2, base 4. Ghazzālī himself set an example. See his speech before the ruler in *Makātibāt*, p. 9 ff, where he admonishes the sovereign while recommending the case of the inhabitants of *Tūs*.

would be tarnished.¹ This gives us a clue to the condition of the Budget in those far off days, where it seems that the income was put down under different independent heads and expenditure earmarked as against those heads, and that barring exceptions, an attempt not to exceed the bounds of the Law could honestly be made.

Simplicity of the Ideal Sovereign.—Of course, with public services to be performed with the limited income at the disposal of the ruler, it would not be possible for him to live a life of plenty and luxury, so that it is only in the nature of things that Ghazzālī lays it down that he should be as simple in his habits as possible. He gives the instance of the Apostle of Islam being admonished by God on the fateful day of Badr because he was standing in shade while his companions were standing in the sun, and taking this as a model he enjoins his sovereign that he should regard himself as only one of the many, and treat his subjects with brotherly affection.² He quotes the Apostle that God would be meek and kind to those rulers who are themselves meek and kind to their subjects.³ One of those whom he regards as a model of justice, equality and simplicity was the Umayyad ruler 'Umar b. 'Abdī'l-'Azīz, who

¹ *Kimiyā*, el. 2, base 4.

² *Tibr.*, pr. 5.

³ *Ibid.*, pr. 8.

once wanted his monthly salary in advance to buy the 'Īd clothes for his daughters but desisted from drawing it from the State treasury because he was reminded by his Finance Minister that there was no certainty of his living for the month for which he wished to draw his pay.¹ He gives a number of instances where the good rulers heard admonitions about their duties from the learned, such as that of 'Aṭa' b. Abī Ribāḥ who was made to sit next to the Khalifah 'Abdu'l-Malik b. Marwān on the throne, and requested by the Khalifah to offer him some advice. The saint thereupon told the ruler to fear God, tend His creatures, treat the descendants of the *émigrés* (the Muhājirīn) and the Helpers (Anṣār)² with great care, deal with the borderers with leniency, to be considerate to those who came to his palace doors with complaints and never to shut them on their faces. To all this the Khalifah listened with great patience and said that he would try to act according to these principles. Such was the greatness of the learned in those days that in spite of the great honour bestowed upon him, when the Khalifah asked the saint what he wanted for himself, he replied that

¹ *Tibr.*, p. 49.

² *Muhājirīn*, those who had been sorely persecuted at the hands of the Quraish and had to leave Mecca for Medina along with the Apostle of Islam; *Anṣār*, those who received him at the latter place, and were his helpers.

he did not want anything from any of God's creatures! This and a number of other anecdotes from the history of Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf, Hārūnu'r-Rashīd, Mu'taḍid Bi'l-lāh and other rulers are given to indicate the respect of the sovereigns for those who excelled in learning, and the sense of equality between the ruler and the ruled which was the ideal set up in those days.¹ In spite of these lofty ideals, Ghazzālī seems to have rightly realised that times had changed since the early days of Islam, and besides honest work there was something else—a certain amount of prestige which is wanted to exert a psychological influence on the people and keep Law and Order in the land, which is the first desideratum of Statehood, and he would desist from doing anything which might result in the disintegration of the State through the lack of these factors.²

Slavery.—It is in the essence of the Islamic ideal that all men are equal before the Law, and perhaps arguing from this truth, the master tells his sovereign that he should deal with the people in such a manner that they should be agreeable to the rule of Law, quoting the Apostolic Tradition that the best of the Muslims are those who seek

¹ *Iḥyā*, II, 9, iv.

² *Ibid.* For the importance of prestige by means of 'dignified elements' in the constitution, see Bagehot's *English Constitution*, ch. I.

mutual love and respect and the worst those who deal with each other in anger.¹ It is this principle which is the basis of the Islamic theory of slavery, and Ghazzālī quotes the Apostle of Islam again that the masters should feed and clothe the slaves in exactly the same manner as themselves, should immediately sell them off when they are of no use to them and not to keep God's creatures in perpetual agony, always remembering that if it were the will of God, He would have turned the tables making the slaves themselves masters of their present owners. Ghazzālī says that it is the right of the slaves not to be deprived of food and clothes and never to be looked down upon, and if they do anything wrong, it should remind the master of all the sins against God's command which he himself commits every day.²

Secret Service.—The ideal king is one who keeps a watchful eye on the innermost affairs of the State, and Ghazzālī very pertinently remarks that a king without secret service men at his command and without the news of the country constantly coming to him is like a body without a soul.³ At the same time, however, he sets definite limits to external interference, State or otherwise, in the privacy of the household, and quotes the

¹ *Tibr.*, pr. 9.

² *Kīmīyā*, el. 2, base 5.

³ *Sirr.*, Essay 5, on the organisation of the country.

story of the Khalīfah 'Umar who wanted to spy on a man by climbing his wall and who was told by the owner of the house that he had done himself wrong by acting against the precepts of the Qur'ān which enjoins (i) not to probe into others' secrets,¹ (ii) not to enter others' houses except by the front doors,² (iii) not to enter any house barring one's own except after speaking to the owner and offering him one's compliments.³ We at the present day are fully aware that every government has its secret service to keep it on guard against both internal and external dangers which might be hidden from view, and Ghazzālī, having lived in the entourage of a great minister in his youth, gives the institution the importance which is its due with, however, certain limitations which it would be well for even modern governments to follow.⁴

Ghazzālī and Democracy.—Here it is necessary to digress a little from Ghazzālī's trend of ideas about the practice of Politics. We must remember that his outlook on political organisation is entirely different from modern democratic outlook. Democracy with all its attendant consequences demands that there should be a system of checks and balances, and the authority of the

¹ Qur'ān, lxix, 12.² *Ibid.*, ii. 189.³ *Ibid.*, xxiv, 27.⁴ *Iḥyā*, II, 9. ii.

ruler should be hedged in by the authority of the Legislature which should encroach more and more upon the Executive power till that power is virtually transferred to the hands of its chosen representatives. In Islam there is no real kingship, but in Ghazzālī's time this ideal had given place to the numerous dynasties which had grown up in different parts of what was once the mighty Empire of Islam. What Ghazzālī does is to put the two ideas together and to draw his own conclusions as to how kingship can be adapted to the Islamic ideal of equality before God and limited by the dictates of the Law. He brings down kingship to the level of the democratic emirate by hedging it with the ideal set up by the Apostle of Islam and his successors. It was an extremely difficult task, for the two institutions were poles apart, and Ghazzālī realises his difficulty. He possibly knows that the ideal would not be acceptable in the light of the changed conditions of the Islamic world, still, like the honest man that he was, he fearlessly puts it forward in order that an attempt might be made to act upon it.

Anyhow, while there seems a great difference between his ideal and the modern democratic notions, if we were to go into the question more fully, we would find that the transition between

the two is not so difficult as it looks, for in both cases it is the Law which is uppermost, may it be human or Divine. Both systems are, however, different from modern dictatorships which have sprung up after the Great War, for in this case there is absolutely no limit to the power of the Dictator. He is free to act without any legal limit to his power, without any check or balance and without the necessity of counsel. He regards himself supreme above all laws and institutions, a human divinity set up by himself to end chaos according to his own private inclinations.

Counsel.—One feels that the differentia between the democratic and the dictatorial systems is the need for counsel, and Ghazzālī makes it a requisite for successful kingship. The need for counsel is interspersed throughout the chapters and books which the Master has devoted to Politics. He says that the ruler should take advice from those who are learned or are experts in any branch of the administration.¹ This matter is dealt with great precision in the *Tibru'l-Masbūk*, where the very second principle of government, the one after Justice, is said to be the need for counsel, and as has been previously related, the kings who take the advice of the

¹ *Tibr.*, pr. 1.

learned are regarded as the best of their order, while the learned men are taught to act independently, never to kiss the king's hand, nor to bow before him except when the king is such as to have earned respect out of his piety or good deeds.¹ He quotes the saint Sufiyān-i Ṣūrī to the same effect in another place² and says that the Apostle of Islam used to take advice of his companions according to definite orders of God as enjoined in the Qur'ān.³

Provincial Administration.—Ghazzālī is quite clear in his mind with regard to the duties and functions of provincial governors. He quotes the Letter of Instruction issued by the Khalīfah 'Umar to one of his governors, Abū Mūsa el-Ash'arī, in which the Khalīfah says that the best governor is he who does good to his subjects, and the worst is he who treats them harshly. No governor should issue orders while he is overpowered with anger or lust.⁴ He quotes the Sassanian Emperor, Ardshīr who is related to have said that when a ruler cannot reform his principal officers and cannot keep them from committing cruel deeds, he cannot be expected to reform the lot of the people in any

¹ *Kāmiyā*, el. 2 base 4.

² *Tibr.*, p. 71.

³ *Ibid.*, ch. II.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pr. 3.

way. He wants the affairs of the provinces to be given in charge of the nobles of the land, while there should be a strict supervision of food and water in every fortress as well as of the defence of the land, while the commanders in charge of the fortresses should be good and kind to the soldiers under him, and even the least thing should be given its proper importance and its consequences properly proved into, for,

ولا تحقرن امرأً صغيراً فربما

تموت الافاعى من سموم العقارب¹

The governors and the commanders of fortresses should absolutely desist from taking any intoxicating liquor for it leads to temporary insanity and a hundred other vile consequences.²

Ministry.—So far as the organisation of the government is concerned, Ghazzālī rightly lays a great stress on the need of an honest minister, and a whole chapter is devoted to the topic in the *Tibr*.³ He says that the worth of the Sultān is increased and his fame spreads far and

¹ "You should not despise a small thing, for it often happens that snakes die from the poison of scorpions."

² *Sirr.*, Essay 6.

³ *Tibr.*, ch. II.

wide if he has a good minister by his side, for a faithful minister is the guardian of the ruler's secrets and the chief intermediary between him and the rest of his officers. On the other hand rulers ought to respect their ministers, for (such was the accepted ideal in those days), for they would correct the rulers' *faux pas* the moment they come across them. Ardshīr, the Emperor of Īrān is reported to have said that there are four categories of persons the services of whom should be commandeered whenever they are discovered, namely, a learned secretary, an honest minister, kind chamberlain and a good counsellor.

Conclusion.—We have briefly sketched the political thought of a great *savant* who was, in a sense, superior to some of those who had gone before him in that while he had become perfectly at home in the working of the political machine when he was attending the court of his patron, Nizāmu'l-Mulk, and had made a close study of the problem of politics, it was his lot to leave off his luxurious life and write most of his works from a neutral point of vantage in Syria or Arabia or else in the seclusion of his paternal hearth and home. He is superior to el-Māwardī in being analytical as well as comparative in his argument, to the author of the *Qābus-Nāmah* in that his works are either independent books or

else pamphlets written with a rare dignity and grace for his own sovereign, and to Nizāmu'l-Mulk himself in that he is far more independent and far more neutral in his analysis than the Seljūqī Wazīr. A student of the history of political theories is aware of the great gap which seems to exist between the decline of Roman thought about the beginning of the Christian era till about the thirteenth century, when thought seems dull, constitutions unscientific and people lethargic and pleasure-loving. Knowledge would be the richer and chains of thought more continuous if that artificial blank were to be filled by such giants of wisdom as Māwardī, Nizāmu'l-Mulk and el-Ghazzālī. Even in Oriental thought, Ghazzālī's place is certain. As has been said elsewhere,¹ the ways had parted and people had begun to look towards the pagan east for inspiration. Ghazzālī's greatness partly consists in having successfully refilled the desired outline by brilliant Islamic colours, although they were not destined to last very long, giving place once again, and finally, to barbaric hues.

¹ See above, ch. V.

Chapter 7

MAḤMŪD GĀWĀN

(1411-1481)¹

Early Life.—Khwājā-i-Jahān Maḥmūd Gāwān's personality is one of the most attractive in the history of the Deccan. He was born at Qāwān or Gāwān in the Kingdom of Gilān on the Caspian Sea in 1411 and was the son of Jalālu'd-dīn Muḥammad, the tutor of the prince who later ascended the throne of Gilān as Sulṭān 'Alāu'd-dīn.² He says that his ancestors had filled high office and even ministries in their country and had moved in close proximity to the rulers of the land,³ while his own uncle Shamsu'd-dīn had held the post of a minister and he had himself helped him in the performance of his onerous duties. It might

¹ For a detailed information about this minister see the author's work entitled *Maḥmūd Gāwān, the great Bahmanī Wazīr*, published by the Kitabistān, Allāhabād, 1942.

² There are eight letters addressed to Sulṭān 'Alāu'd-dīn of Gilān in the collection of Maḥmūd Gāwān's letters, the *Riyāḍu'l-Inshā*. The manuscript copies I have used for this chapter are (1) from the library of Nawāb Ṣadr Yār Jang Bahādur at Ḥabībganj, district 'Alīgarh, and (2) MSS., Aṣaffiyah Library, Hyderabad Deccan, *Inshā-i-Fārsī*, 140. Where otherwise indicated, all references are from the former.

³ *Riyāḍ*, Intr., 6b.

thus be said that he was already versed in the art of government when he arrived in India in 1453. The reason for his leaving the land of his birth seems to be that a powerful clique had sprung up there which envied the rise of the Khwājā's family, and although he had every chance of acquiring a high position in his own land, he says that his "shoulders could not bear the burden of high governmental office,"¹ and he left the country thoroughly disgusted with the atmosphere of intrigue around him. What seems to have happened was that the commander-in-chief, Hājī Muḥammad and the minister 'Alī, who had both been *protégés* of Maḥmūd's family, had become its deadly enemies, and perhaps feeling that he could not cope with the situation and having a strong sense of self-respect, he left his ancestral home on a self-imposed exile never to return.² He now adopted trade as a profession and was successful to the extent that he was able to engage in overseas dealings and amass a wealth of 40,000 silver pieces, landing at Dābūl in 1453 and wending his way to the metropolis of the Deccan, Muḥammad-ābād-Bīdar.³ The immediate cause of his coming to Bīdar seems to be that he wished to sit at the feet of Shāh Muḥibbu'l-lāh, son of the great

¹ Intr., 6.² xi. 34.³ *Ferishtā*, I, 359-360.

divine, Shāh Ni'matu'l-lāh Kirmānī, who had come to settle down there.¹

The Bahmanī Kingdom.—The Bahmanī Kingdom was governed then by 'Alāu'd-dīn Aḥmad II,² who was immediately impressed by the worth of this Gīlānī trader. Maḥmūd praises 'Alāu'd-dīn in one of his letters he wrote to the Sulṭān of Gīlān, and attributes the kindness he received at Bīdar to the Hands of the Divine Providence, saying that it was due to 'the ointment of the goodness of his late Majesty that the wounds of migration from home were healed.'³ In the same letter the Khwājā is all praises for he much maligned Humāyūn Shāh Bahmanī,⁴ who was the one who 'discovered' Maḥmūd as a general and an administrator, put him in a position of responsibility and command and willed that he should act as a co-regent during the minority of his son Nizāmu'd-dīn Aḥmad III.⁵ It was an unfortunate occurrence that there should have been so many rebellions during Humāyūn's reign followed by harsh measures, otherwise he was a comparatively peace-loving monarch. He was assisted in the task of government by his great queen, one of the most sagacious women India has produced, Makhdūma-i-Jahān Nargis Begam, and he left

¹ *Ferishtā*, I, 358.

² 1434-1457.

³ *Riyāḍ*, xxi, 54b.

⁴ 1457-1460.

⁵ 1460-1462.

his kingdom consolidated and secure enough to be ruled by his son, a young boy barely eight years of age. It is to his credit that he knew the real character of men and showed his foresight in appointing Maḥmūd as co-regent with Malik Shāh Turk under the direct supervision of the queen. When Maḥmūd was requested by the Sultān of Gilān to return to his erstwhile home he respectfully replied that he was too much overwhelmed by the kindness shown to him by the Bahmanī sovereigns to have any desire to leave India, which he must continue to serve to the end of his day, allowing his son 'Abdu'l-lāh to represent him in Gilān instead.¹

Parties at Bīdar.—When Maḥmūd arrived at Bīdar the Bahmanī Kingdom was rent asunder by the rift between the *Āfāqīs* and the *Dakḥnīs*. The latter included besides the original inhabitants of the land, those who had migrated from the north a couple of hundred years before, as well as the negro and negroid *ḥabashīs*, while the *Āfāqīs* or *Gharibs* consisted of fresh migrants mainly from *Īrān* and Central Asia who come either on royal invitation or merely as adventurers² and generally ended their lives in their

¹ For the character of Humāyūn Shāh Bahmanī, see "*Maḥmūd Gāwān*," ch. III B. For reference to the text, see *Riyāḍ*, xxi, 54b.

² It is wrong to translate '*Āfāqī*' as foreigners' as Sir Wolseley Haig has done in the *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. III, chs. XV

adopted country. The first time we hear of these antagonism was in the reign of Shihābu'd-dīn Aḥmad I,¹ surnamed Walī, who was helped to the throne by an Āfāqī, Khalaf Ḥasan of Baṣrah, whom he gave the title of Maliku't-Tujjār or 'Prince of Merchants,' a title which finally descended on Maḥmūd Gāwān himself. It was the great heights to which Khalaf Ḥasan reached which was an eyesore to all his opponents, and a party soon sprung up at the court the avowed object of which was the annihilation of the Gharibs sometimes without the knowledge of the king and even against the personal feelings of the ruler. As matters stood, the rulers of the Deccan from Aḥmad Shāh I to Humāyūn had a strong bias for the Gharibs or Āfāqīs. Aḥmad tested their loyalty time and again, and finally when they were successful against Vijayanagar in 1493, he ordered a special corps of archers from 'Irāq, Khurāsān, Transoxania, Turkey and Arabia, under Maliku't-Tujjār, who subdued the country round about Daulatābād and earned the honours bestowed on him by his master. Perhaps the next great influx of the Āfāqīs was after the arrival of the sons of Shāh Ni'matu'l-lāh Kirmānī in 1430, one of whom became the son-in-law of the King

and XVI, as most of them had made the Deccan their home.

¹ 1422-1434.

and the other that of the Crown Prince.¹

The same policy was pursued in the reign of 'Alāu'd-dīn Aḥmad II as well who made Dilāwar Khān Afghān his Wakīl-i-Kul, Khwāja-i-Jahān Astarābādī his Wazīr-i-Kul and 'Imādu'l-Mulk Ghorī his Amīru'l-Umarā;² all of whom being Āfāqīs. The purely Dakhnī party sided with Prince Muḥammad who caused the leaders of his opponents to be put to death. When war was declared against Khāndēsh and Khalaf Ḥasan Baṣrī ordered to command the Bahmanī forces, he requested the king to send only Mughals and Arabs with him, as in certain former campaigns, such as that of Mahāim the Bahmanī arms were unsuccessful owing to a cleavage between the Āfāqī and the Dakhnī soldiery.³ Anyhow the campaign was enormously successful, the Khāndēshīs being routed at Ronkhēr Ghat, and the Āfāqī commander-in-chief had a rousing reception at Bīdar resulting in the issue of a royal decree that on all occasions the Gharībīs should occupy the position on the king's right and the Dakhnīs and Ḥabashīs on his left. Ferishtā says that this

¹ For a fuller history of the problem of the Āfāqīs, see *Maḥmūd Gāwān*, ch. II.

² The Wakīl-i-Saltanat generally looked after foreign affairs while the Wazīr-i-Kul supervised the Home Department. These offices are described fully in the Urdu work, *Sīratu'l-Maḥmūd*, by the late Maulvī 'Azīz Mirzā, Badāyūn, 1927.

³ Modern Māhim. This was in 1430.

occasion was the beginning of even a greater animosity between the two sections of the population of the Deccan.

Baṣrī was again victorious with his Gharībs against Vijayanagar, but was deluded by his enemies during a campaign in Konkan. He was trapped by Rai Sirkā in a wood to which he had been taken by a ruse, and then by some of the royal soldiers of the opposite party who surrounded the remnant of the Gharībs in the fort at Chākan, did not allow their petitions to reach the king at the capital, and killed them almost to a man.¹ When 'Alāu'd-dīn heard of the facts of the situation he had the ringleaders severely dealt with and promoted a number of Gharībs such as Qāsim Beg Ṣafshikan who was created Maliku't-Tujjār and commander of Daulatābād and Junair. It was about this time that Maḥmūd Gāwāṇ was given a Maṇṣab of 1000 and saw his first campaign. When 'Alāu'd-dīn Aḥmad saw that his end was near he willed that Maḥmūd should be made governor of Bijāpūr and Malik Shāh Turk governor of Tilangānā after him.

On Humāyūn's accession to the throne the party cleavage took a dynastic turn, the Dakḥnī-Rājput party siding with the pretenders Ḥasan Khān and Sikandar Khān, and when Nizāmu'd-

¹ The episode is related in great detail in *Maḥmūd Gāwāṇ*, ch. II.

dīn Aḥmad III succeeded Humāyūn in 1460 the reins of government came into the hands of Khwājā-i-Jahān Malik Shāh who became Wakīl-i-Kul and Maḥmūd Gāwān who was appointed Wazīr-i-Kul. As has already been mentioned, the master mind which supervised the whole system was that of the Queen Dowager who ruled the country during the short reign of her son Nizāmu'd-dīn Aḥmad III and continued to perform her responsible duties during the earlier part of the reign of her other son Muḥammad III.¹ Maḥmūd became the sole minister on the murder of Khwājā-i-Jahān Turk in open court in 1466.

Conduct as a Party Politician.—We have given this résumé of the party cleavages during the forty years between the accession of Aḥmad I in 1422 and the elevation of Maḥmūd to the chief ministership in 1466 in order to estimate the policy of the minister in relation to party politics. If we follow his career closely we would find that he knew no party in the sense that his contemporaries understood by the term, and whatever 'Āfāqism' there lingered in him was completely overcome by a sentiment of the most intense loyalty towards the dynasty he was serving and the country he had made his own.

¹ 1462-1482.

As a matter of fact attempts were made to make her régime a failure mainly by withholding supplies from him when he took up the command of the Bahmanī forces against the Rājā of Rāingnā and while he was engaged in active operations against the strong fort of Sangamēshwar.¹ He bitterly complains to Maulāna Muḥammad Lārī in a letter he writes from the camp at Sangamēshwar about depletion in men and money.² In another letter he says that he has to face not only the avowed enemy of the kingdom in the person of the Rājā but also those within the kingdom who were envious of his position in the State, and that although those in places of responsibility were withholding help in crucial moments he was able to take possession of Goa in the name of his master all the same.³ In another letter he says that his opponents were carrying on a malicious propaganda against him⁴ even to the extent of directly poisoning the ears of the king himself.⁵ It was no doubt as a result of these machinations that his son 'Alī, Maliku't-Tujjār, writes to him pleading for harsh measures against those who were sowing dissensions in the realm.⁶ But the father

¹ See *Maḥmūd Gāwān*, ch. VI.

² *Riyāḍ*, xxvii, 65.

³ *Ixix*, 126b.

⁴ *Ixviii*, 125b.

⁵ *Ixxxviii*, 143b.

⁶ This letter is contained in the *Riyāḍ*, *Aṣaf*, fol. 140.

was built of a different stuff, and struck a distinct line for himself completely ignoring these machinations. He writes to Nizāmu'l-Mulk that whatever had taken place, *i.e.*, the shortage of supplies in the battlefield, was really due to the policy of Musnad-i-Ālī, although the interests of Musnad-i-Ālī and himself were one and the same, and pleads for a union of the parties, for their "this is bound to lead to a large amount of good and the destruction of the enemies of the realm."¹ We must here remember that it was not merely in theory that the Khwājā was pleading for a truce between the two groups for the good of the kingdom, but when it came to a distribution of places of profit and authority he held the scales evenly between them setting an example for the future potentates of the country. Thus he recruited an equal number of Habashīs and Dakhnīs on the one hand and immigrant Circassians and Central Asians on the other in the royal bodyguard, putting a pure Dakhnī, Nizāmu'l-Mulk in command of the army of Orissa. In the case of the newly created governorates also he took care not to show any partiality towards any section of the population of the kingdom at the expense of the other, making Nizāmu'l-Mulk and 'Imādu'l-Mulk, both

¹ *Riyāḍ*, lxviii, 125b.

Dakhnīs, governors of Rajahmundrī and Gāwil, the Ḥabashīs Dastūr Dinār and Khudāwand Khān governors of Gulbargā and Māhūr, Prince A'zam, a descendant of 'Alāu'd-dīn Aḥmad II, governor of Warangal, and the Āfāqīs, Yūsuf 'Adil Khān and Fakhru'l-Mulk Gīlānī, governors of Daulat-ābād and Junair, keeping Bījāpūr for himself.¹

This 'balance of power' on the part of the Khwājā was due partly to his intense loyalty towards his sovereign and partly to the need he felt for the peace and prosperity of the kingdom. The collection of his letters is full of communications to his friends, Ministers of State, foreign potentates, and the Sultān of the land of his birth and early manhood, Gīlān, and in these he left no stone unturned to show the respective addressees his profound feelings of gratitude and affection for his Bahmanī master and to recount the great work which was being undertaken by the kings of his adopted country.² In one of his letters he shows the esteem with which he held the memory of Humāyūn Shāh,³ and in another he gives vent to his intense grief at the death of his patroness, the Queen Dowager, saying that although his age and bodily infirmities would not have allowed him to continue to perform his

¹ See, *Maḥmūd Gāwān*, ch. VI.

² *Ibid.*, ch. VII.

³ *Riyāḍ*, cxliii, 217b.

duties which had become doubly onerous by that terrible event, yet he considered it his bounden duty to act according to the dictates of his royal master.¹ There is no letter written to a foreign ruler, may he be the Sultān of Gilān or the Sultān of Turkey, where he does not recount the greatness of the Bahmanī Empire.² He writes to the envoy of the Kingdom of Malwa that the Bahmanīs were not rulers of the Deccan merely by an accident but that their rule was based on sheer right, and that the "Empire of the Deccan is like the very Sun in the firmament."³ After the conquest of the territory of Goa he writes to Maulānā Jāmī that whatever parts of the country have come under the sway of the Bahmanīs have become the abode of men of God and the refuge of the learned,⁴ to a learned man of Khurāsān that "the land of the Deccan is superior to any other country,"⁵ and to the King of Gilān that there is no object for the performance of which enough material is not found in his adopted country.⁶ It is impossible here to give even a moderate list of the letters in which he has described his affection for the dynasty and the

¹ lviii, 111b.

² Sherwani, *Deccani Diplomacy and Diplomatic Usage in the Middle of the Fifteenth Century*, Oriental Conf. Proc., Mysore, 1935.

³ *Riyāḍ.*, xix, 52b.

⁴ xxxvii, 69.

⁵ xlii, 92.

⁶ c, 158b.

country of the Deccan, for these sentiments are interspersed practically right through the collection of his letters and in all the actions of his life.

His Political Thought.—Besides the patriotic *motif* of these letters we find that the Khwājā sometimes begins to discuss actual theories of politics in his epistles. In a letter addressed to the Sultān of Gīlān after relating how there is “a fresh victory to the Bahmanī arms every year,” he says that he has been pondering over the principles of justice and the causes of domination and subjection and has come to the conclusion that “those of their own free will and without any compulsion act according to the principles of the Book (Qur’ān) and the News (Ḥadīṣ) wear the turban of freedom, while those who put a cap of pride over their heads with the hand of denial fall from the steed of authority; while some pass the stage of subjection to elevated pedestals of high office and others through good fortune even sit on royal thrones.”¹ From this a number of things appear. Firstly that in spite of intense monarchic leanings Maḥmūd was democrat at heart and like the author of the *Qābūs Nāmāh*² believed in the possibility of those from the ranks attaining the highest honours in the realm, and if fortune was

¹ xiii, 38b.

² See ch. VI.

on their side, even became kings themselves. History shows instances almost in every country of the Islamic world where men from the lowest rungs of society, even slaves, rose step by step and founded dynasties through personal merit.¹ This was no other than the principle enunciated in five pithy words, *la carrière ouverte aux talents* by the great Corsican who became the arbiter of Europe through sheer personal ability. Worth is always militating against accidents of birth so that men with a broad outlook and societies with a democratic trend are ever laying stress on the former, Maḥmūd was one of those who, while believing in a monarchical form of government also thought that mere accident of birth should not come in the way of the attainment of the highest reward by those who, perhaps humble and lowly, are best fitted to serve the State.

Besides birth and native ability there is a third possible course leading to the attainment of honour and authority, and that is industry, and Maḥmūd is alive to the proper position of this element in human progress. He writes to his son Alaf *Khān* that those who take life in an easy manner are not to be seen among the great,

¹ The Mamelukes of Egypt and the Slave Kings of India are cases in point. Recently we have had an instance in *Riḡā Shāh Pahlavī* of *Īrān*, of a man from the ranks becomes the hereditary ruler of an ancient nation.

while those with high ambitions who are also industrious sit with the Kings and Sultāns. He gives the instance of the crow and the kite which are content with what they get and always look downwards with the result that they are regarded as lowly and fit to be driven away, while the falcon which has the courage to look up and always uses his wings with industry, always suffering great hardships of hunger and fatigue, is rightly called the King of Birds and deservedly sits on the hands of the high and the mighty.¹

Among the letters to his relations there is a long letter written to the only son of his who attained any renown in the Deccan, *i.e.*, 'Alī Maliku't-Tujjār in which he lays stress on the qualities necessary for an average man to rise in status and honour, and the enumeration of these qualities show us the political and diplomatic morality of the age in the best of colours.² First and foremost he says that one must forestall consequences in the light of past experiences. We know well that history in its broadest connotation is a guide to future conduct only in the sense that it gives us numerous instances of numerous causes and effects and leaves us to try and judge

¹ *Riyāḍ*., xxv, 64.

² *Ibid.*, xxxv, 74. This letter is reproduced *verbatim* in *Sirat*, *op. cit.*, and is the only letter in the *Riyāḍ*., fully utilised by the author, the late Moulvi 'Azīz Mirzā.

the future in the light of the past. No doubt such a judgment can at its best, be only approximately correct, still there is no other way to have even a dim idea of the future except in the light of the past. Maḥmūd advises his son to treat every one according to his station in life in order to obviate any unnecessary rancour, and to exercise his power of forgiveness as often as possible. He says that there are some who are above others in intellect and reason, and a high officer should take care to promote them according to their worth. Lastly a ruler should divest the country of all causes of disorder, should be good and kind to all whether high or low, be brave in the time of need and always industrious and hard-working. Such are the precepts which the Khwājā considers necessary to be acted upon if one wants to brave the pitfalls of the world and rise in men's estimation, and we have no doubt that it was qualities like these which made the Khwājā himself what he was.

We might wind up the whole spirit of the Khwājā's thought in the witty epigram he used in a letter to one of his sons, that on common sense depends the fulfilment of all objects, on knowledge the highest station in life and on the way of living the qualities of virtue and a character.

Administrative Reforms.—It seems that it was

after the Maharashtra Campaign that the Khwājā initiated his great administrative and military reforms which have made his name rightly famous in the history of the Deccan and which, at the same time proved to be one of the chief causes of his end.¹ The principles on which the political structure of the kingdom was based had been laid down by Muḥammad Shāh I who divided the kingdom into four *aṭrāf* or provinces each ruled by a *ṭarafdār*. The kingdom then comprised mainly the table land of the Deccan up to the Western Ghats a part of the Tilangānā and the Rāichūr Doab, and the provinces were called Berār, Daulatābād, Gulbargā and Tilangānā. The progress of the kingdom during the last hundred years and especially during Maḥmūd Gāwān's ministry had been phenomenal and the Bahmanī Empire now embraced the whole of the Konkan coast in the west, Goa in the south-west, the utmost limits of Tilangānā in the east, and the Krishnā-Tungābhadrā Doab in the south, while in the north it included Māhūr and Berār and its frontiers touched Khāndēsh which was itself under its protection.² In spite of this great extension no attempt had yet been made to recast the provincial administration and the former divisions

¹ See ch. VII.

² For this assertion see *Burhānu'l-Maʿāṣir*, Hyderabad edition,

had been suffered to remain as before with greatly extended areas, with the result that the Ṭarafdār of each province became virtually a small potentate within his territory sometimes ready to withstand the order of the central government itself.

Maḥmūd therefore divided the empire into eight provinces of moderate size. Two provinces, Gāwil and Māhūr were carved out of the old 'Berar,' Daulatābād and Junair formed the old 'Daulatābād,' province, Bījāpūr and Gulbargā represented the old 'Gulbargā' while the old Tilangānā with new additions was divided into two charges, Rajahmundrī and Warangal. Apart from nearly halving the old provincial areas the *Kh*wājā removed certain tracts from the jurisdiction of each of the new governors bringing them directly under the control of the king himself as the *Kh*ṣa-i-Sulṭānī or Royal Domain, thus putting a strong royal check on the power of the Ṭarafdār in his own province.

This was also insufficient for the reformer's hands. It had been the rule almost since the foundation of the Bahmanī State that there was no limit to the authority of the Ṭarafdār over the

1936, p. 124, where it is mentioned that the Bahmanī coins were current in *Kh*āndesh and the name of the Bahmanī Sulṭān mentioned in Friday sermons there.

military affairs of his province, as not only could he appoint commanders of the garrison in the different forts within his territory but was more or less at liberty to keep as many men on active duty as he liked, and while he was the sole authority on all military matters he could save a large amount from the *maṣṣab* he received from the central treasury or the *jāgīr* possessed even to the extent of depleting the military forces which might therefore not be able to withstand the dangers besetting the empire.

Maḥmūd revolutionised the whole system of military administration. He made it the rule that there should be only *one* fortress under the direct command of the *Ṭarafdār* in the whole province while the *qila'dārs* or commandants of all the other forts should be appointed by the central government and be responsible to it. Having an eye on every detail of the administration he was aware of the great corruption and mismanagement caused by the system under which each commander was given a certain *maṣṣab* or *jāgīr* without reference to his abilities and loyalty, and although the amount was originally fixed in proportions to the troops at command of the *Maṣṣabdār* or *Jāgīrdār* the system had become very lax in course of time and grants were made without much regard to the duty of

keeping any fixed number of troops. The Khwājā reformed this plan in a thorough-going manner. He passed the rule that every Maṣṣabdar was to be paid at the rate of a lac of hons¹ (later raised to a lac and a quarter) annually for every 500 men kept under arms, and if jāgīrs were granted in lieu of cash payments provision was made whereby the Jāgīrdār was to be compensated to the extent of losses incurred in the collections of rent, while if a Maṣṣabdar or Jāgīrdār failed to maintain the stipulated number of soldiers he had to refund the proportionate amount back into the royal treasury.

We might say that the direction of Maḥmūd Gāwān's reforms took more or less the same turn as those of William the Conqueror of England, for both these men wished to curb the power of the big lords, both divided large fiefs into smaller states, and both brought them more or less directly under the central government, while Maḥmūd went a step further and made the fief-holders accountable to the central government in the matter of expenditure on the feudal army. He himself set an example of integrity and responsibility by always refunding the amount saved from his military fiefs after official disbursements never spending anything out of it

¹ A hon—about Rs. 4. The reforms are mentioned in *Fer.*, I, 356.

on his own person. It is related how after his death his personal treasurer told the king how he continued to trade with the capital he had brought from Īrān thirty years before, and how the profits accruing from it were the sole means of livelihood even when he was serving his king and the country which he had made his own.

Apart from these civil and military reforms, the Khawājā was the one of the first ministers in Medieval India to have ordered a systematic measurement of the land, fixing the boundaries of different villages and towns and making a thorough enquiry into the assessment of revenue. Thus on the one hand he made it easy to determine the income of the State and furnish a complete Record of Rights, forestalling Raja Tōḍar Mal's reforms by a century, on the other hand he tried to curb the power of the nobles and thereby raise the status of the central government.

Fate of the Khawājā's Reforms.—These beneficent reforms affected by the Khawājā came to naught after him. The chief cause of their failure was precisely the height which the Khawājā had attained. After the death of his patroness, the Dowager Queen in 1473, and even before that, he was the virtual dictator of the Bahmanī Empire. As is well known, it is the

weakness of all dictatorial institutions that there is no guarantee that a dictator's successors would be as far-seeing, as patriotic and as loyal to the cause as the dictator himself. Maḥmūd's strength lay in his great qualities of head and heart, and the weakness of the system lay in that there was no one else in the kingdom who could be his fit successor. The man who had been in the position of his ward for years and whom he had trained in the art of government almost from his boyhood, was the very man who was made a tool by the discontented faction to put an end to the Khwājā's life,¹ and although it is possible that he might have carried out the Khwājā's system, he himself died barely twelve months after the end of the man he had caused to be murdered. The result was the disruption of the empire into a number of independent principalities and finally its end even in name a little more than forty years after the fateful 5th of April, 1481.²

¹ Muḥammad Shāh III, surnamed 'Lashkarī' at the Khwājā's instance; 1462-1482.

² The date of the Khwājā's murder.

Chapter 8

RECAPITULATION

INTRODUCTION

Although Orientalists of the West have paid great attention to Arabic and Persian works of early Islamic writers, very little has been done so far to systematise political thought contained in these works, and as writers on European political philosophy are generally unaware of the political thought contained in them, they have done little to bring this thought in a line with corresponding political thought of the West. No doubt Oriental political philosophers—or some of them—have found their way to general encyclopædias and books connected with Islam, still they are treated there mostly as *littérateurs*. And an average man not conversant with or not sufficiently interested in Oriental or Islamic literature has little inclination to turn to these references. The result is that although a wealth of political thought is found in the works of Muslim *savants* from the eighth till about the fourteenth century, writers on political theories, after dealing with

the Classical epoch and the Christian Fathers pass on to what little there was in European political philosophy in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.¹ It would, therefore, be in the fitness of things if a correct estimate is made of Islamic political thought during these centuries, an estimate which is bound to bridge the gulf which seems to exist between the Classical and the Medieval epochs, as well as to give the modern man an insight into a particular aspect of Oriental thought nearly a thousand years ago.

No doubt one or two giants of the Islamic world have been dealt with at some length in connection with earlier or later political thought. Professor Flint, for instance, has rightly given a fairly large place to Ibni Khaldūn in his *History of the Philosophy of History*,² calling him "the first writer to treat history as the proper object of a special science." But Flint deals with him only as a historiographer, and when he comes to his enunciation of political principles he says that although "it is full of instruction and interest . . . it does not properly concern us here." Latterly Māwardī has been drawing some attention

¹ This state of affairs is worth noting even in such fairly detailed works as Dunning, *Political Theories, Ancient and Medieval*, New York 1930, and Janet, *Histoire de la Science Politique*, Paris, Alcan.

² Blackwood, 1893, Introduction, pp. 157-170. Ibni Khaldūn, lived 1332-1406.

from the point of view of the analysis of the Khilāfat and the Imāmat.¹ But there are others of equally great importance who might be dealt with as links of a universal rather than a purely sectional chain of thought. Instances are myriad, but among them may be mentioned Ghazzālī ('Algazel') and Fārābī, besides such Western Muslim savants as Ibni Bājjah ('Avempace'), Ibni Rushd ('Averroes') and Ibni Tūfail² ('Abubacer'), whose writings contain much that is of interest to a student of political philosophy. No doubt many of the Muslim authors of the first few centuries after the rise of Islam deal more with the science of government than with abstract political theories and proceed to analyse the Islamic system of administration which had proved such a great success before their eyes, but we must remember that most of them have definite politico-philosophic ideas interspersed in their works and these are bound to prove interesting and instructive if we were to look for them.³

¹ Thus Professor H. A. R. Gibbs's article on al-Māwardī's Theory of the Khilāfah, *Islamic Culture*, July 1937.

² Ibni Bājjah of Saragossa, died 1138; Ibni Tūfail of Guadix, died 1185, Ibni Rushd of Cordova, died 1193. These and other philosophers have been dealt with as metaphysical philosophers in the learned compendium of De Boer, *History of Philosophy in Islam*, Eng. tr. London, 1893.

³ Machiavelli himself can hardly be called a political theorist, as

For the sake of convenience the theories of political philosophers outlined in this paper have been divided according to the orthodox division generally adopted by writers of the subject, viz.,

- I. Theory of the State.
- II. Origin of the State.
- III. Sovereignty and the Sovereign Power.
- IV. Form of the State.

To these might be added Internationalism and Diplomacy and the theories of the interference of the State in the affairs of the individuals. We shall take each of these heads separately and briefly indicate the line adopted by some of the Islamic writers who have made a direct contribution under these heads.

I. THEORY OF THE STATE

Fārābī¹ says that Man has certain powers prominent in his nature, such as powers of Speech, Contention and Thought. The power of Contention is the one which makes a man desire to approach or recede from a certain point, and is

he was really an expert in government and diplomacy. Still he finds a prominent place in every history of political thought.

¹ 870-950. The two treatises from which quotations have been given in this chapter are *Siyāsatu'l-madaniyah* (Motive Forces in the City), referred to as *Siyās*, Hyderabad Deccan : 1346 H. and *Ārāu ahli 'I Madīnat'il-Fādilah*, ('Opinions of the Citizens of the Model City'), referred to as *Ārā*, Nil Press, Cairo.

the basis of all love and hate, friendship and enmity, war and peace; it is sensation like this which gives the urge to found human groupings ranging from a casual meeting on the roadway, permanent habitations in the City¹ (or as we would call it, the State) and hypothetical International brotherhood. As will be seen, it is this power of contention which forms really the whole basis of the State even as we know it, and one of the most important (according to some, the only)² functions of the State is that of settling differences which naturally arise between man and man owing to differences in the respective points of view and inherent dispositions.³

Māwardī⁴ says that Imāmat or Headship in the State is concerned with the defence of the Faith as also with the administration of worldly affairs. He says that this central institution, by which the different sections of the community are held together, as well as the basic rules governing it, should have precedence over every-

¹ Political philosophers of this period use the term 'medīnah' or City to denote the State, after the fashion of the City States of the ancient Greeks. Even in our own times the words 'Politics' and 'Police' mean 'pertaining to the city.'

² The Individualistic Minimum.

³ *Siyās*, 3, 4.

⁴ 974-1058. *Al-Aḥkāmū's-Sultānīyah*, ('Orders pertaining to Government'), Enger's recension, Bonn, 1853; French translation by Fagnan, Algiers, 1915. In this paper the book is referred to as *Aḥkām*.

thing else, even over the day-to-day legislation, for without fixed basic laws "anarchy and licence would be the order of the day after the fashion of the savages of the desert who are wont to fly at each others' throats." It will thus be seen that Māwardī, in spite of his peculiar ideology and his leanings towards the elucidation of the science of government is fully cognisant of the need of a regularised State with organic laws regulating the various parts of the body politic.¹

Ghazzālī,² in essence, divides Sciences into two categories, i.e., science dealing with man in his individual capacity, such as medicine, and those which deal with him as a member of the Society. He is quite clear about the place which Political Science has in his scheme and defines it as a science which "deals with the proper organisation of State affairs of the mundane variety."

¹ *Aḥkām*, Introduction and Ch. I.

² 1058-1111. Ghazzālī has a number of books on the State and Government to his credit. His books with references to political phenomena are: Parts of *Iḥyā'u'l-'Ulūm*, Vol. III, Cairo, 1306 H., the *Kīmīyāi Sa'ādat*, Bombay, 1314 H., translated into English by H. A. Homes, as the *Alchemy of Happiness* published in New York. There are number of other works attributed to him which deal wholly or partly with politics, e.g., *Tibru'l-Masbūk* ('Molten-Gold'), ed. Ḥamzāwī, Cairo 1277, and the *Sirru'l-'Alamīn* ('Mystery of the Two Worlds'). The division of sciences alluded to is from *Munīqith* ('Deliverance'), Cairo, 1303 H., p. 13 and the *Fāṭḥatu'l-'Ulūm* ('Introduction to Sciences'), Cairo 1322 H., ch. IV and V. The definition of Political Science is found in the *Fatīḥah*.

This, as will be seen, is as clear as any modern definition of the Science can be.

II. ORIGIN OF THE STATE

It is remarkable how early Muslim savants were aware of the complications which must present themselves when one begins to analyse the question of the origin of the State. At present there are, in the main, four theories of the evolution of the State; one, represented by the upholders of the Contract method considers the States to be purely an artificial institution arising out of the mutual contract of the individuals who renounced their powers in order to form a political society; the second bases the State on sheer force; the third, called the Patriarchal theory, is sponsored by Aristotle: and the fourth is the modern Evolutionary theory which regards the State as the natural outcome of the evolution of ideas inherent in human nature. One is amazed to find the rudiments—sometimes even details—of all these theories in the works of the Muslim savants of the distant past.

Fārābī's work on the opinions of the denizens of the Model City may be said to be a compendium of most of the theories of the origin of

the State as an artificial institution, while Ghazzālī has a wonderfully modern conception of the evolution of the State from Man's natural need for collective action.¹

Fārābī's work contains an enunciation of the principles underlying the later theory of Social Contract. He says that what is usually called justice in sale and purchase is due either to the fear of the other party, or weakness, or else to the necessity that there should be absolutely no compulsion in transactions, and while buying and selling is taking place both parties should be on an equal footing. Originally the more powerful were overbearing to the weaker, with the result that there was constant quarrelling. When people got tired of this, they gathered together and each one left off that part of his authority through which he had tried to overpower his fellow men, provided others did the same. Thus men became perfectly peaceful to each other.²

It is not within the scope of this paper to offer any criticism to this theory, which might for convenience be called the theory of Mutual Renunciation of Rights, but only to bring it to the notice of the world of Learning that Fārābī was the forerunner of those who upheld Contract as the basis of the State in seventeenth and

¹ *Ārā*, p. 86 ff. specially pp. 106-111.

² *Ārā*, p. 113.

eighteenth centuries. It is remarkable that, although he utilises this theory in connection with the contract of sale and purchase, the steps which he treads are virtually the same as those trod by political theorists nearly a thousand years later.¹

Fārābī enumerates the motives of association between man and man and gives the gist of different theories in the form of opinions of the denizens of his "City." Some of them consider that no association is possible between man and man except through dire necessity, which arises when some try to overpower others, while others think that it is not possible for human to exist except when there is a continuous co-operation between them.² He then alludes to the patriarchal factor and says that many people regard the fact of birth as entailing the co-operation of the progeny as against everyone else, so that those descended from the same progenitor are more likely to co-operate with one another than aliens.³ He also

¹ A glance at the Social Contract as depicted by Thomas Hobbes in his epoch-making book, the *Leviathan*, shows how closely his description of the Contract follows that of Fārābī who wrote seven centuries earlier. Hobbes says (*Lev.*, ch. XVII) that at the time of the institution of the Commonwealth, real unity was achieved by covenant "as if every man should say to every man, 'I authorise and give up my right of governing myself to this man, or this assembly of men, on condition, that thou give up thy right to him and authorise all actions in like manner.'"

² *Ārā*, 108.

³ *Ibid.*, 109.

gives a gist of the theory of Force when he says that people with physical power gather together others by force and utilise them to enslave their brethren according to their own wish.¹ This is also the burden of what Ibnu'l-Jamā'ah calls the Force-State, when 'a man of authority forces a people by means of his arms and brings them under his personal control.'²

Ibni Khaldūn does not deal so much with the patriarchal aspect of the State as with the natural need of human beings for co-ordinate action. He says that 'man is by nature a social being',³ that is to say, it is necessary for him to live in concert with his fellow men forming "what the ancient called 'the City' and we ourselves call 'human Society.' " For God has created man in such a manner that life is impossible without co-operation, and man needs others' help and at the same time gives help to others. Ibni Khaldūn gives details of this aspect of human life and illustrates it from different professions followed by human beings.⁴

¹ *Ārā*, 109.

² Ibnu'l-Jamā'ah, *Tahrīru'l-Aḥkām* ('Precis of Orders'), edited by Hans Kofler, Islamica, Leipzig, 1934, Heft 4, pp. 335-415. The extract is from 1, 3. The author lived 1241-1333.

³ This is the burden of Aristotle's argument; *vide* his 'Politics,' Jowet's translation, Oxford, 1905, 1, 2.

⁴ Ibni Khaldūn, *Prolog.* p. 35. The edition I have used is that of Bahia Press, Cairo.

It is left to Ghazzālī to enunciate the Evolutionary theory of the State. Ghazzālī, by his very nature, dislikes all that is mundane and discusses the evolution of the State-idea under queer heading of the 'Abuse of the World.'¹ In one of his works he gives the stages through which he passed before he finally began to regard the few days' sojourn in this world as being of no significance compared to the Eternity that is hereafter; still, in spite of these obvious prejudices against devoting too much attention to worldly affairs he is very modern in the treatment of the political problem, and has probably given the lead to many others, perhaps including Ibni Khaldūn himself. Here it would be better to quote his words almost *in extenso* in order to make his meanings clear: "Man is created in such a manner that he cannot live all by himself but is in constant need of others' help, wishing at the same time that someone else, like himself, should always be with him. He needs this company for two reasons, firstly for the sake of procreation, for this is impossible without sexual intercourse with a person of the opposite sex, and secondly so that he might be helped in the preparation of his effects, food, clothing and proper education and the bringing up of his children It is, therefore,

¹ *Iḥyā*, II, 6. V, iii.

in the nature of things that there should be co-operation with a very large number of persons each of whom should belong to a certain trade or industry. Then again these handicraftsmen cannot be independent of each other; for instance it is impossible for the tiller to till his land without recourse to instruments of agriculture, entailing the services of carpenters and blacksmiths, while preparation of food would necessitate the work of the grinder and the cook All this goes to prove that man cannot live alone but wants others' help at every step."

Then again it is necessary to build houses in order to withstand the elements of Nature and erect walls round human habitations to protect men from external intruders. "This means the establishment of Cities,¹ and it is in the nature of human conduct that when men live together and deal with one another a large amount of squabbles and quarrels would necessarily follow . . . and if they were left to their lot they would destroy themselves by continuous feuds and wars.² Under

¹ Bilād, from singular 'balad'; 'Greek, 'polis,' City, or State.

² Compare the theories of Hobbes and Rousseau about the warring elements in a condition of pre-state. Both agree that just before the establishment of the State the State affairs had become unbearable owing to continuous wars between man and man. Ghazzālī does not describe any fantastic condition like that described by these philosophers or their protagonists, but is content with the enunciation of truth. *Vide*, Gettel, *History of Political Thought*, London 1932, ch. XII and XV.

these circumstances it is necessary to establish a system of arbitration and government so that quarrels and feuds might be properly dealt with.”¹

III. SOVEREIGNTY AND THE SOVEREIGN

Early Muslim thinkers are full of theories about the ideal sovereign, theories which are interesting in that they delineate a sovereign who is not above, but definitely and deliberately below the basic laws of the community. It should be borne in mind that this point goes directly counter to all European theories of Sovereignty.² The principle of Islamic Laws are regarded as Divine in their origin, and the theocratic basis of the State entails the idea that State is held in trust for the people by the Amīr or Sovereign under this law. Thus Ibnu'l-Jamā'ah, after enumerating the rights of the Sultān or Khalīfah as against the

¹ Here it would be well to give a *résumé* of the evolution of the State idea as described by the well-known American writer on Political Science, Professor J. W. Garner, who says in his *Introduction to Political Science*, ch. IV, sec. 7, “The State is not a mere artificial mechanical creation but an institution of natural growth, of historical evolution. The idea is well stated by a high authority as follows: ‘The proposition that the State is the product of history means that it is the gradual and continuous development of human society, out of a grossly imperfect beginning It is the gradual realisation, in legal institutions, of universal principles of human nature’” The question is from Jellinek.

² The super-legal Sovereign as depicted by Austin is unknown in Islamic political philosophy.

people, goes on to consider, reciprocally, the rights of the people as against the Khalifah or Sultān. In this connection he regards as rights of the people not only such matters as justice, settlement of claims and legal punishment, but also the levying of legal taxes, superintendence of legal foundations, bridges and other buildings of public utility and distribution of the spoils of war, thus denoting the inherent trust in favour of the people with the Sovereign as a trustee.¹

Nizāmu'l-Mulk Tūsī, the famous minister of Sultān Malik Shāh Seljūqī, says in the introduction to his *Siyāsāt-Nāmah*, or Handbook of Politics, that the sovereign has charge of the well-being of the people and the comfort and tranquillity of his subject as well as responsibility for the peace and security of the land.² His contemporary, Amīr Kaikāūs's work, the *Qābūs Nāmah*, shows the democratic trend of his time in a remarkable way, for, while giving advice to his son, the author takes for granted the possibility of his son, being raised to an exalted position, to be appointed a minister of State or a commander-in-chief, and even to be chosen king of

¹ Ibnu'l-Jamā'ah, *op. cit.*, 1, 4.

² Nizāmu'l-Mulk Tūsī, *Siyāsāt-Nāmah*, Persian text published by Homee, Sohrab & Co., Bombay, 1934 (based on Schaefer's edition, Paris). Schaefer has translated the book into French and has written copious notes on it.

the country. In the last contingency he admonishes his son to be God-fearing, clean of mind and free from immorality, and says that the sole difference between a king and his subject is that the king issues orders while the people obey them.¹

IV. FORM OF THE STATE

Ibni Khaldūn, in his *Prolegomena*, discusses at great length the effect of climatic conditions upon the life (and so upon the political conditions) of a people, and thus forestalls some of Montesquieu's theories by many centuries. He divides the earth into the traditional seven zones according to their temperature, and says that it is the temperate zone where man has excelled in learning as well as in the arts of building, clothing, alimentation and fruit growing, and its inhabitants have been pioneers in sociological arts. He then goes on to co-ordinate climatic conditions with human professions and says, for instance, that in those parts of the world which are suitable for such occupations as rearing of sheep, camels, oxen and bee-keeping, men have to lead their lives in open fields rich in pasture, and fly away from closely inhabited cities.²

¹ *Qābūs Nāmah*, Teheran, 1312 Shamsi.

² Ibni Khaldūn, *Prol.*, Part 1, ch. I, sec. 3, 4, 5. Montesquieu's

He then draws a clear line of demarcation between the citizens and the man of the country, and says that as the inhabitants of the open countryside have to defend themselves with little external help they are braver and more alert than the denizens of the cities who are spoilt by ease, plenty and excessive comfort, and thus the problems which one has to face are quite different in either of these cases.¹

Such, in short, is the enunciation of Ibni Khaldūn. Going back to Fārābī, who flourished in point of date nearly four hundred years earlier, we see how he has a clear vision of the problems of the State, even as they are facing us to-day. He discusses among other things, the motives which lead one State to overpower others' territories and the methods by which such control is effected. He gives a special name to these imperialistic State, i.e., the *medīnatu't-taṣhallub* or State of Control, and says that the citizens of such State have different motives why they want to control vast areas for their own sake, others wish

arguments are similar to some of the arguments brought forward by Ibni Khaldūn, and although the illustrations given by the latter are mostly from Western peoples while those given by Ibni Khaldūn are to a large extent from Oriental nations still both draw their conclusions more or less in a similar way. Of course the treatment by the Frenchman is much more detailed. *Vide Esprit des Lois*, Eng. tr. by Dr. Nugent, London, 1773, Book XIV ff.

¹ *Prolog.*, ch. II.

to have power over each others' actions, while a third group desires to extract service from the inhabitants of the conquered nation.¹ The controlling country should not rest, in any case, until it has acquired a permanent hegemony, and should regard all those who are not its subordinates as its possible enemies. This mastery might be acquired through sheer force, through trade and commerce, or by persuasive means, even to the extent of the employment of women to capture the imagination of the worker-minded people. It is also possible for a superior State to leave internal affairs to be regulated by the subordinate nation itself, while in reality it should not cease to have sufficient hold on the resources of the land.²

Fārābī is cognisant of the existence of Republics, which he calls States of Community. He says that in such states everyone is allowed to do whatever he likes, all citizens are treated as equals and they have a tradition that there should be no control of any particular individual over the people of the community. No doubt there are chiefs in these states as well, but only such as are chosen by the people as proper persons for their headship. The best of these are those who have the capacity to promote the

¹ *Siyās.*, 64.

² *Ārā.*, 117.

liberty of the people as well as keep them under their general supervision, and the best among these republics are those which control the desire of the citizens to the extent of their real needs.¹

Besides his description of the principles underlying Imperialism, Fārābī is thoroughly modern in another political field, *i.e.*, that of colonisation. While giving the reasons why people leave their motherland for seeking fortunes elsewhere, he says that this might be due to economic necessity, pressure from foreign powers or the fear of an epidemic. The colonist who seek home in other lands might either bring the laws of their mother country with them and codify them, or else be inclined to frame their own laws if they feel that their ancestral laws are not suitable to their changed surroundings.² The latter contingency would naturally entail a large amount of freedom from the control of the mother country, and it shows that Fārābī contemplates the existence of what are called, in the parlance of the British Empire, Crown Colonies, as well as the modern Dominions, and it redounds to his credit that he should be so much ahead of his time in his political conceptions.

In the same connection Fārābī gives the gist of communistic and individualistic theories. He

¹ *Siyās.*, 69.

² *Siyās.*, 60.

says that the citizens of the Model City have things in common among them, but although he has the translation of Plato's *Republic* by his elbow, he does not fall in the Platonic impossibility of making everything, even women, the common property of the male citizens. As a matter of fact it is quite clear that, apart from the common property to which everyone would have equal rights, each man and each class would also be allowed individual property apart from the opportunity to acquire individual knowledge and scope for individual action.¹ Moreover he knows the essence of the individualistic theory and recognises that there are people who think that man is a natural hater of his own kin and what unity there might be between man and man is through dire necessity and, therefore, for distinct avowed objects.²

Fārābī gives an account of the natural barriers to human unity. He says that the nature of various nations differ owing to a difference in the reactions of heavenly bodies on them, causing in turn variation in precipitation and food of the people which react on their character. This he calls the natural barriers, while one of the artificial factors which divide one nation from another consists in differences in languages which

¹ *Ārā*, 93.

² *Ārā*, 88.

preclude people from freely communicating with each other.¹

Nizāmu'l-Mulk Ṭūsī knows the hidden meaning of sending ambassadors and envoys to foreign lands, showing that he was aware of the principles which really frame the diplomatic policies of successful states. His ideas in this connection seem Machiavellian in their character, but it cannot be gainsaid that, different to the Florentine diplomat, he is not justifying the current underhand practices of politics but is only telling the reader the real motives underlying practically all diplomatic appointments. It will be well to give the gist of his own ideas here.

“We must remember that the real object of foreign ambassadorial appointments is not that they should convey the messages of their governments only, but if we were to look deeply into their purpose we would find a number of secret objects, such as the knowledge of the exact position and condition of the roads, path valleys, canals and tanks, whether they are fit for passage of troops and whether fodder is available anywhere near them. They also seek to know something about the ruler of the country and the exact state of the army and other equipment...to penetrate into the working of government and to

¹ *Siyās.*, 40.

know whether the ministers are honest or otherwise, whether the generals are experienced or not. The real object of all these investigations is that, if it were the programme of their native country to fight the country to which they are accredited,...then all this information might prove useful.¹

Above are a few theories propounded by certain early Islamic writers. They have here been enumerated only by way of illustration, as any exhaustive criticism of any one of the theories or their sources would need a far larger space. It should be remembered as well that the authors that have been mentioned here are but a few in the galaxy of thoughtful Muslims who enriched political philosophy by their writing, and it is their rightful due that greater attention were paid to them by us.

¹ *Siyāsat-Nāmah*, ch. XXI.

INDEX

A

- Aaron; 48, 95, 154
- 'Abbās b. 'Abdī'l-Muṭṭalib; 40, 169
- 'Abbās, Māmūn's son; 71
- Abbasids:
- Translation of Greek authors; 67, 68, 100
 - The Golden Age of Arabic Literature; 69
 - Decline; 97, 138
 - Centre of orthodox Sunnism; 98, 99
 - Administration in Fārābī's time; 100, 118
 - Rise of Turks and Persians; 134-137, 139
 - Administration in the tenth and the eleventh centuries; 143-148
 - Eclipse, 148
- 'Abdu'l-lāh, Maḥmūd Gāwān's grandson 235
- 'Abdu'l-lāh b. 'Abdū'l-Muṭṭalib; 41, 169
- 'Abdu'l-lāh b. Ḥamdān, Abu'l-Haijā; 98
- 'Abdu'l-lāh b. Rawāḥah; 162
- 'Abdu'l-lāh b. Ṭāhir; 175
- 'Abdu'l-lāh b. 'Uṣman: see *Abū Bakr*
- 'Abdu'l-Malik b. Marwān, Umayyad Caliph; 222
- 'Abdu'l-Muṭṭalib:
- Envoy to Irān; 35
 - Ra'īs of the Meccan Republic; 41
 - Death; 41
 - His daughter Zainab married; 64 n. 2
- 'Abdu'r-Raḥmān a'n-Nāṣir; 174
- Abraha el-Ashram; 41
- Abraham; 33, 34, 52
- Absolutism; 4, 20
- Abū Bakr, the first Caliph; 40, 218
- Abū Bakr e'sh-Shiblī; 97, 101
- Abū Ḥanīfah; 159
- Abū Mūsā el-Ash'arī; 162, 228
- Abū Qābūs Nu'mān; 34
- Abū Sufiyan; 41, 61 n. 1
- Abū Ṭāhir Ḥārīṣ; 171
- Abū Tammām; 69
- Abyssinia; 35, 37, 65
- 'Ad; 47
- Administration of the Abbasids: in the time of the Caliph Mu'taṣim; 70-73
- In Fārābī's time; 101-103
 - In the tenth and eleventh centuries; 143, 148
 - According to Ghazzālī; 288
 - "Āfāqīs" and "Dakhnīs"; 235-239
- Africa; 15
- Afshin; 72, 73
- Aḥmad I Bahmanī: see *Shihābu'd-dīn Aḥmad I*
- Aḥmad II Bahmanī: see *'Alāu'd-dīn Aḥmad II*
- Aḥmad III Bahmanī: see *Nizāmu'd-dīn Aḥmad III*
- Akad; 37

276 *Muslim Political Thought and Administration*

- Alaf *Khān* ; 245
 'Alāu'd-dīn, Sultān of Gīlān ; 233, 234, 235, 243
 'Alāu'd-dīn Aḥmad II Bahmanī ; 234, 237, 238, 242, 244
 Aleppo ; 99
 Alexander the Great ; 10, 170, 217
 Algazel : see *Ghazzālī*
 Alhazen ; 67
 'Alī, Gīlānī minister ; 233
 'Alī b. Abī Ṭalīb, fourth Caliph ; 95, 162, 216, 218
 'Alī b. 'Abdī'l-Haijā' ; see *Saiḥū'd-Dawlah*
 'Alī, Maliku't-Tujjār ; 240, 246
 'Alī b. 'Isā ; 102
 'Alī e'r-Riḍā ; 69, 189
 Alp Arslān ; 137, 170, 171, 172, 173
 Alptagīn ; 136
 Ambassadors, Niẓāmu'l-Mulk Ṭusi on ; 182, 273
 Amīru'l-Umarā, creation of the post of ; 146
 America, United States of ; 140
 Āminah, Muḥammad's mother ; 41
 'Ammān ; 37, 222
 Anṣār ; 45
 Anūshīrwān ; 25, 29, 157, 169
 'Aqabah ; 44
 Aquinas ; 197
 Arabia ; 3, 33-42, 47, 55, 63, 230, 236
 Main divisions of the population ; 33
 Pre-Islamic Arab kingdoms ; 34, 35
 Importance of the Tribe ; 36
 Pre-Islamic social structure ; 36, 56
 Inter-tribal feuds ; 37
 Fairs ; 37
 The Meccan Republic ; 37-42
 Arabic ideal of the Abbasid Caliphate ; 147
 'Arafāt ; 47
 'Askarī, Ḥasan el-, Apostolic Imām ; 98
 Ardshīr, Sassanian Emperor ; 228, 230
 'Āridū'l-Jaish ; 194
 Aristotle ; 1, 21, 31, 68, 70, 80 n. 2, 82 n. 1, 90 n. 1, 92 n. 4, 96, 104, 105, 106, 164, 177, 209, 260.
 Arminia ; 137
 Arthasāstra ; 10 ff.
 Asad b. 'Abdī'l-'Uzzā ; 40
 Ashnās ; 72, 146
 Assassins ; 171
 Assyria ; 1
 'Aṭā b. Ribāḥ ; 222
 Athens ; 21, 31, 164, 177
 Austin ; 115, 209, 266
 Autocracy in the Orient and the Occident ; 138.
 Averroës ; see *Ibn Rushd*
 Avicenna ; 67, 105
 Ā'zam, Bahmanī prince ; 242
- B
- Bābek *Khurramī* ; 73
 Babylon ; 34
 Babylonia ; 2
 Badr ; 60
 Bagehot ; 223 n. 2
 Baghdād ; 69, 72, 96, 99, 102, 104, 119, 134, 135, 148, 171, 173, 175, 191, 192
 Bahmanī kingdom ; 234-253
 Baitu'l-Ḥikmat ; 70, 72, 74, 100
 Baṣrah ; 148, 173
 Bāṭiniyah sect ; 171
 Bentham ; 177
 Berar ; 248, 249
 Berūnī ; 137

- Bible as the basis of English Law ; 141, 204 n. 1
- Bidar : see *Muḥammadābād-Bidar*
- Bijāpūr ; 238, 242, 249
- Biological similes :
 In Fārābī's works ; 120-122
 In Ghazzālī's works ; 211-213
- Bolshevik State ; 140
- Bodin ; 1, 17, 115, 179
- Bosphorus ; 172
- Brockelmann on Ibn Abī'r-Rabī's date ; 73
- Bukhārī ; 69
- Buwaiḥ, Aḥmad b., made Sulṭān ; 102
- Buwaiḥids ; 134, 135, 136, 138, 145, 146, 164
- Buzurchimīr ; 169, 217
- Byzantium ; 25, 28, 29, 33, 34, 47, 134
 Government ; 29
 Social castes ; 29, 30
 Taxation ; 30
 Position of the Emperor ; 30
 Misery in the time of Justinian ; 30, 31
 Lack of religious toleration ; 31, 32, 61
 Suppression of schools of rhetoric and philosophy ; 31
 Abolition of Olympic Games ; 32
 Sovereignty over Arabian states ; 37
 And Mecca ; 42
 In the time of the Seljūqīs ; 170, 186
- C
- Cairo ; 16
- Caliph, high position of the Abbasid ; 146
- Caliphate, succession to, according to Māwardī ; 161
- Camel, Battle of the ; 162
- Capitalistic states, underlying principles of ; 140
- Chaghri Beg Dāwūd ; 171
- Chākan ; 238
- Chandragupta Maurya ; 10
- Chānakya ; see *Kauṭilya*
- Charlemagne ; 66, 132
- Ch'ī : 7
- Capetian dynasty in France ; 197
- Caspian Sea ; 233
- China ; 2, 5-8, 121
- Ch'ou ; 7, 8, 9, 21
- Christians :
 In Irān ; 18
 In Byzantium ; 31
 Of Arabia ; 62
 Under the Abbasids ; 100 n. 4
- Church, controversy with the State ; 197
- Colonisation according to Fārābī ; 127, 271
- Compact for Mutual Renunciation of Rights ; 26, 112, 113, 124
- Comparative method of argument according to Ibn Khaldūn ; 16
- Confucius :
 His political thought ; 5-8, 21
 Early life ; 5
 Basis of Political Thought ; 5
 Five elements of Society ; 6
 Parable of the woman of Ch'ī ; 7
- Constantinople : see *Byzantium*
- Co-operation, motives for political ; 123-125
- Cordova ; 175
- Counsel, Ghazzālī on ; 219, 227
- Crimes, Punishment for, in the Qur'ān ; 54, 521
- Crusades ; 61

278 *Muslim Political Thought and Administration*

D

- Dabīrpād ; 27
 Dābul ; 233
 "Dakhnīs" and "Afāqīs" ; 235-239
 Damascus ; 34, 104
 Darius ; 180
 Dastūr Dīnār ; 242
 Daulatābād ; 230, 242, 248, 249
 David the Prophet ; 167
 Departments of Government :
 In the time of the Abbasids ; 70, 144
 According to Māwardī ; 158
 According to Ghazzālī ; 225-227
 Dictatorship, modern ; 227
 Dilāwar Khān Afghān ; 237
 Diogenes, Byzantine Emperor ; 170
 Disorder abhorred in the Qur'ān ; 51, 52, 60
 Diwān, derivation of the word ; 157
 Diwānu'l-'Aziz :
 In Mu'taṣim's time ; 70
 Division into various Dīwāns ; 101, 144
 Dūmatu'l-Jundal ; 37

E

- Economic theories of Ghazzālī ; 208
 Eastern Roman Empire : see *Byzantium*
 Edward I of England ; 142
 Egypt ; 2, 16, 47
 Causes of decline according to Qur'ān ; 48
 Moses and Aaron sent to Pharaoh ; 48
 The Fatimids ; 135
 The Mamelukes ; 245 n. 1
 Empires, Formation of ; 126, 129
 Ibn Abī'r-Rabī on ; 91

- Fārābī's theories ; 61, 140, 141, 142, 153, 270
 England ; 139, 140, 141, 142, 174, 204 n. 1
 Euphrates ; 34
 Europe :
 In the tenth and the eleventh centuries ; 132, 133
 Political thought in the eleventh and twelfth centuries ; 196-198
 Executive, Ghazzālī on the ; 218
 Experience and Perception, Ghazzālī on ; 198

F

- Faḍl b. Marwān ; 72
 Faḍl b. Suhail ; 144
 Fakhrū'd-dīn Ḥasan ; 173
 Fakhrū'l-Mulk ; 173
 Fakhrū'l-Mulk Gīlānī ; 242
 Fārābī ; 74, 96-131, 137, 256
 Early life ; 96
 Political conditions ; 97-99
 Authorities for ; 97 n. 1
 At Saifu'd-Dowla's court ; 101
 Administration in his time ; 101-103
 His versatility and works ; 103
 Indifference to wealth ; 104, 107
 Death ; 105
 Works on Political Science ; 106-108, 257 n. 1
 Species of human intellect ; 108, 116
 Human powers ; 109
 Human groupings ; 110
 Barriers to human unity ; 111, 272
 Place of State in human groupings ; 111
 Compact for Mutual Renunciation of Rights ; 112, 124, 261
 Sovereignty ; 113, 115, 116

- Leadership ; 114, 117, 118
 The Foremost Leader ; 115, 120, 124, 125
 The Ideal Sovereign ; 116, 128
 The Model State ; 115-117, 122, 125
 Practical machinery of politics ; 118
 Internal organisation of the State ; 119
 Political similes ; 120-122
 Communalism and Individualism ; 122, 272
 Causes of the formation of political societies ; 123-125, 257, 262
 Varieties of states ; 125, 129
 Empires ; 126, 129, 269
 Colonies ; 127-130, 271
 Scope of his political thought ; 130
 Theory of the State ; 257
 And Social Contract ; 261
 Theory of Force ; 263
 Fatimids of Egypt ; 135
 Favouritism, Ghazzālī on ; 220
 Fernando the Catholic ; 15, 139
 Fez ; 16
 Fih̄r ; 38
 Firdausī ; 189
 France ; 132, 134, 141, 153, 197
 Frederick II, Emperor ; 197
 French Revolution, Europe before ; 140
 Force, Theory of, as origin of the State ; 263
 Fuḍail b. Ayād ; 176
- G**
- Galen ; 106
 Ganges ; 136
 Gaul ; 132
 Gāwil ; 241, 249
 Geographical reactions on Society 17, 18, 111
 George VI of England ; 142
 Georgia ; 137
 Germany ; 132, 134
 Wars of Religion ; 61
 Modern ; 63
 Gezit tax in Īrān ; 28
Gharibs ; see Āfāqīs
Ghassān ; 34, 46
Ghazzālāh ; 190
Ghazzālī ; 189-231, 256
 Compared to Ibn Abī'r-Rabī' ; 81
 n. 1, 83 n. 1
 Compared to Fārābī ; 122
 Life ; 190
 Political conditions ; 192
 Political works ; 195, 259 n. 2
 Contemporary political thought in Europe ; 196-198
 Perception *versus* Experience ; 198-200
 Ethics and Politics ; 199
 'Mundane and Celestial' ; 200-202
 On Worldliness ; 201
 Division of Sciences ; 202-204, 259
 Place of Politics in the scheme of sciences ; 202, 210
 Definition of Politics ; 203
 Evolution of the State idea ; 204-207, 264-266
 Comparison with Hobbes and Rousseau ; 205 n. 1
 Development of the Arts ; 205
 On Kingship ; 207
 Economic theories ; 208
 Division of population into grades ; 208
 Theory of Sovereignty ; 209

280 *Muslim Political Thought and Administration*

- State, Law, Constitution and Group Mind, Ibn Khaldūn's Religion ; 210
 Biological similes ; 211-213
 His method ; 213
 Compared to Māwardī and Nizām-u'l-Mulk Tūsī ; 213, 230
 Justice and Kingship ; 210, 214-220, 226, 229
 Duties and functions of the Executive ; 218
 The ideal ruler ; 217
 The ruler's daily routine ; 218-220
 Heads of Revenue ; 220
 Simplicity of the ideal sovereign ; 221-223
 Secret Service ; 224
 On Democracy ; 225-227
 On Counsel ; 227
 Provincial Administration ; 228
 Ministry ; 229
 Writings compared to Qābūs Nāmāh ; 230
 Fills a gap ; 231
 Theory of the State ; 259
 Compared to Garner ; 266 n. 1
 Gilān ; 233, 234, 235, 242
 Goa ; 240, 243, 248
 God the Ruler ; 50, 51
 Government :
 Mencius's theory ; 8
 Kautilya's views ; 13
 In Byzantium ; 29
 Abbasid ; 70, 144
 Governors according to Ghazzālī ; 228
 Granada ; 16
 Greece ; 2, 177, 197, 199
 Political rights in ; 207 n. 1
 Individual's relation with the State ; 93
 Greek thought, influence of ; 100
 Green ; 1
 theory of ; 18, 19
 Gulbarga ; 242, 248, 249
 H
 Ḥaḍramaut ; 37
 Hastings, Battle of ; 197
 Hajar ; 37
 Ḥājī Muḥammad, Gīlānī Commander-in-Chief ; 233
 Ḥājib, office of ; 70, 144
 Ḥājibū'l-Barīd ; 145
 Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf ; 223
 Ḥamdānids, rise of ; 98
 Ḥamīdu'l-Mulk ; 172
 Ḥamzah ; 61
 Ḥanbal, Aḥmad b. ; 69, 100
 Ḥārīṣ b. Qais ; 40
 Ḥārīṣ b. 'Umar ; 41
 Harpad ; 27
 Ḥarrān ; 96
 Ḥārūnu'r-Rashīd ; 69, 74, 143, 189, 218, 223
 Hazārpad or Irānian Prime Minister ; 27
 Hegel ; 93
 Hellas ; see *Greece*
 Henry IV of England ; 141
 Heraclius, Byzantine Emperor ; 29, 32
 Hijābah ; 38, 40
 Hijāz ; 34, 37, 175, 190
 Ḥilfu'l-Fuḍūl ; 42
 Hind, wife of Abū Sufiyān ; 61
 Ḥirah ; 26, 34
 Hirāt ; 173
 History, Nizāmū'l-Mulk Tūsī on ; 185
 Utility of ; 246
 Hobbes ; 1, 11, 112, 113, 179, 205 n. 1, 209, 261

Holy Roman Empire ; 197
 Hulāgū ; 76
 Humāyūn Shāh Bahmanī ; 234, 235
 n. 1, 238, 242
 Hunain b. Ishāq el-'Ibādī ; 70
 Husain b. Hamdān ; 98
 Huṣaiṣ ; 40
 Hyderabad ; 3, 26 n. 1

I

- Ibn Abī'r-Rabī' ; 66-95
 Background of his theories ; 69
 Compilation of *Sulūkū'l-Mālik* ;
 69
 Jurjī Zaidān's theory about the
 period ; 73-77
 Brockelmann's theory about the
 period ; 77
 The epithet, 'Shihābu'd-dīn' ; 69,
 74, 75
 Estimate of Mu'taṣim ; 76
 Estimate of Mu'taṣim's wazīr ; 77
 Manuscripts of his work ; 77, 78
 Subject matter of the *Sulūk* ; 68-
 96
 Position of Man among the crea-
 tures ; 79, 80
 Man's social nature and its con-
 sequences ; 80
 Human faculties ; 80
 Man a thinking being ; 80
 Man's needs cause economic
 phenomena ; 81
 Rural and Urban gatherings ; 81
 His theory of man's rise to citi-
 zenship compared to *Ghazzālī's* ;
 81 n. 1
 Division of Sciences ; 82, 83
 Place of History and Politics
 among the Sciences ; 83
 Compared with *Ghazzālī's* and
 Pollock's division of Sciences ;
 83 n. 1
 Officers of State advised to study
 politics and history ; 84, 95
 Sovereignty ; 84-86
 Compared with Locke ; 84 n. 2
 Compared with Ibn *Khaldūn* ; 85
 n. 1
 Perquisites of a Sovereign ; 85
 His Sovereign different from an
 autocrat ; 86, 88 n. 1
 Justice ; 84, 86-89
 System of rights ; 87
 Qualities of a Judge ; 88
 Theory of Revolution ; 89
 Sedition ; 89
 Internal turmoils, their causes
 and cure ; 90
 Problem of wealth ; 90-92
 Slavery ; 92
 Ethical basis of his doctrines ; 93
 Kingship ; 94
 His method purely analytical ; 95
 Ibn Bājjah (Avempace) ; 68, 256
 Ibu Buṭlān ; 77
 Ibn Jarīr ; 159
 Ibn *Khaldūn* :
 Political thought ; 15-20, 22, 255
 His life sketch ; 16
 His method ; 16
 Causes of differences between
 groups ; 17
 Physical background of Politics ;
 17, 18
 Theory of Group Mind ; 18
 Duration of the Life of the State ;
 19, 20
 Nature of nomadic life ; 19
 Origin of the State ; 263
 Form of the State ; 268
 Effect of climatic conditions on
 Politics ; 268

282 *Muslim Political Thought and Administration*

- Ibn Nadīm ; 74
 Ibn Rushd (Averroës) ; 66, 67, 68, 256
 Ibnu'l-Furāt ; 102
 Ibn Tufail ; 68, 256
 Ibnu'l-Jamā'ah :
 Origin of the State ; 263
 Rights of the people ; 267
 Ibn Zayyat, Mu'taṣim's wazir ; 77
 Ibrāhīm Nakḥafī ; 201
 'Imādu'd-Dowlah ; 102
 'Imādu'd-dīn Zangī ; 103
 'Imādu'l-Mulk Ghori ; 237
 'Imādu'l-Mulk Dakhnī ; 241
 Imām, election of ; 151-153
 Duties of ; 153
 Imāmat ; according to Māwardī ; 150-154, 160,
 According to Nizāmū'l-Mulk Tūsi ; 176
 Imāmu'l-Ḥaramain ; 172, 190
 Imān and Islām, doctrine of ; 53
 Internationalism ; 111, 272
 Inquisitions ; 61
 Irān ; 25-29, 47, 65, 163, 164, 199
 The Irānian state ; 25, 26, 27
 Castes ; 25
 Position of the Shahinshāh ; 26, 27
 Aristocratic orders ; 26
 Social grades ; 26
 Political structure ; 26
 Legislative principles ; 27
 Religious position ; 27
 Punishments ; 28
 Taxes ; 28
 Position of the Jews and Christians ; 28, 61
 Suzerainty over Ḥīrah ; 34, 37
 Relations with Yemen ; 35
 And 'Abdu'l-Muṭṭalib ; 35
 Influence over the Caliphate ; 35, 147
 Original home of the Āfāqīs of the Deccan ; 235
 Riḍā Shāh Pahlavī ; 245 n. 1
 Īrānspāhpad ; 29
 'Irāq ; 47, 163, 236
 Isabella of Castille ; 15, 139
 Iṣfahān ; 134, 171, 173
 Israel, The people of ; 48, 51
 Ītākḥ ; 72
 Italy ; 132, 134
- J
- Ja'far b. Abī Ṭalib ; 162
 Ja'far the Barmakid ; 144
 Jalālu'd-dīn Muḥammad ; 233
 Jāmī, Maulana Nūru'd-dīn ; 243
 Jalālu'd-Dowlah ; 150
 Japan ; 3
 Jaxertes ; 136, 172
 Jerusalem ; 142
 Jews :
 In Irān ; 28
 In Byzantium ; 31, 32
 Banished from Jerusalem ; 32
 In Medina ; 45, 46
 Under the Abbasids ; 100 n. 4
 Jiziah ; 59
 Junair ; 238, 242, 249
 Jurhumites in Mecca ; 37
 Jurjān ; 136, 166, 190
 Jurjī Zaidān on Ibn Abī'r-Rabī's date ; 73-75
 Jurjīs b. Bakhtīshu' ; 70
 Justice :
 According to the Qur'an ; 51, 54, 55, 56, 161
 In the time of the Caliph Mu'taṣim ; 71
 According to Ibn Abī'r-Rabī' ; 86-89

- Plato's conception of; 87
 In European History; 87 n. 1
 According to Māwardī; 159, 161
 According to Nizāmu'l-Mulk
 Ṭūsī; 176, 182
 According to Ghazzālī; 210, 214-
 217, 219
 Justin II, Byzantine Emperor; 29
 Justinian, Byzantine Emperor; 29,
 30, 31

K

- Ka'b; 39, 41
 Ka'bah; 38, 40, 42
 Kaikā'ūs; 165-170
 Author of Qābūs Nāmāh; 165,
 166
 Why he wrote Qābūs Nāmāh;
 166
 Contents of the work; 167-169
 Proximity to the royal person;
 167
 Ministership; 167
 Kingship; 168, 169
 His method; 168-170
 Comparison with Māwardī and
 Nizāmu'l-Mulk Ṭūsī; 187, 188
 Comparison with Ghazzālī; 230
 Karbalā, tragedy of; 98
 Kashghar; 171
 Kātibu'd-Diwan; 159
 Kauṭilya, Chānakya or Vishnu-
 gupta; Political thought of; 10-15,
 21, 22
 His Arthasāstra; 10 ff.
 Theory of Matsya-Nyāya; 11
 Theory of Kingship; 12, 13, 14
 The three shaktis; 12, 13
 Art of Government; 13
 Comparison with Machiavelli; 13
 Theory of punishment; 14

- Khalaf Hasan Baṣri; 237, 238
Khalid b. Walīd; 40
Khāndesh; 237, 248
Khāimmah; 40
Khrāg tax in Īrān; 28
Kharāj; 59
Khudāwand Khān; 242
Khurāsān; 136, 236, 243
Khusrū II of Īrān; 34
Khwāja-i-Jahān Astrābadī; 237
Khwārizm; 134
Kindī; 94, 109 n. 1
 Kingship:

- According to Mencius; 8, 9
 According to Kauṭilya; 12, 13, 14
 In Īrān; 26, 27
 In Byzantium; 30
 According to the Qur'ān; 50, 51
 According to Ibn Abī'r-Rabī'; 85,
 94
 According to Nizāmu'l-Mulk
 Ṭūsī; 178-181
 According to Ghazzālī; 207, 214-
 223, 226, 227, 228, 229
 Konkan; 238, 248
 K'ung Fū-Tze: see *Confucius*

L

- Law:
 Conception of, in the Qur'ān; 50
 53, 54, 55, 59
 In Īrān; 27
 According to Ibn Abī'r-Rabī'; 88
 n. 1
 Colonists free to legislate accord-
 ing to Fārābī; 128
 Sources of, in Medieval Europe;
 141, 204 n. 1
 Sources in Islām; 111
 According to Ghazzālī; 210, 221,
 223, 227
 Laws of War in the Qur'ān; 59

284 *Muslim Political Thought and Administration*

Leadership, Farābī on; 114, 115-117, 118
 Legislature; 226
 'Leviathan', 177
 Liwā; 38, 41
 Locke; 209, 210 n. 3
 Lorenzo the Magnificent; 99
 Lū; 5
 Lyceum of Athens suppressed; 31

M

Machiavelli compared with Kauṭīl-ya; 13
 Divorces Ethics from Politics; 68
 Macedonia; 164, 177
 Ma'dī Karab of Yemen; 35
 Madīnatu't-taghallub; or Imperialistic State; 127
 Māgī, Tribe of, in Īrān; 26, 27
 Māgīpets or Mobeds; 26, 29
 Mahāim; 237
 Mahdī, Abbasid Caliph; 70, 144
 Mahdī, last Apostolic Imām; 96, 98
 Maḥmūd Gawān; 232-253
 Birth and early life; 232-234
 And 'Alāu'd-dīn of Gilān; 234
 Relations with Bahmanī sovereigns; 234
 Co-Regent during Aḥmad III Bahmanī's minority; 234
 Political parties at Bīdar on his arrival; 235-237
 Governor of Bījāpūr; 238
 Conduct as a party politician; 239, 244
 Chief Minister of the Bahmanī Kingdom; 239
 Commander-in-Chief of Western India; 240, 248
 Loyalty to the Bahmanī cause; 242-244

His correspondence; 241-247
 Causes of domination and subjection; 244
 On Birth, Ability and Industry; 244-246
 Qualities necessary for rise in status; 246
 Administrative reforms; 248-252
 Military reforms; 250
 His reforms compared to William the Conqueror's reforms; 251
 Fiscal reforms; 252
 His strength and weakness; 253
 Maḥmūd of Ghaznah; 136, 174
 Māhūr; 242, 248, 249
 Maḥdūma-i-Jahān Nargis Begam 234, 239, 242, 252
 Malik Shāh Seljūqī; 171, 172, 173, 186, 193
 Malik Shāh Turk; 235, 238, 239
 Maliku'l-Mulūk, title of; 135
 Malwā; 243
 Mamelukes of Egypt; 245 n. 1
 Māmūn, Abbasi Caliph; 69, 70, 71, 74, 100
 Man:
 Viceregent of God; 51
 Position among creatures, 78-80
 His social nature and its consequences, 80-82
 His needs cause economic phenomena, 80
 Maṅṣūr, Abbasid Caliph; 143
 Maṅṣūr el-Ḥallāj; 97, 101
 Marzbāns; 26
 Mas'ūdī; 137
 Mathurā; 134
 Mattā b. Yūnus; 96
 Matsya Nyāya, doctrine of; 11
 Maurice, Byzantine Emperor; 29
 Māwardī; 148-165; 231, 255
 Life sketch; 148-150

- His works; 150, 268 n. 2
 The Imāmat; 152-154, 258
 Election of Imām; 151-153
 Ministry; 154-156
 Departments of government; 156-159
 Derivation of the word 'dīwān'; 157
 Justice; 159, 161
 Scope of his political thought; 160-163
 Utilisation of taxes; 161
 Succession to the Caliphate; 161
 Islamic law of war; 162
 Condition of the office of the Qāḍī; 162
 Qualities requisite for a wazīr; 163
 His method of argument; 164
 Comparison of his method with that of Aristotle; 164
 Comparison with Niẓāmu'l-Mulk and Kaikā'ūs; 187
 Comparison with Ghazzālī; 213, 230
 His theory of the State; 258
 Mecca:
 Before Islām; 37-42, 43, 44, 52
 The Jurhumites; 37
 Qusai's system of government; 38
 Attack by Abrahā el-Ashram, 41
 Lawlessness after 'Abdu'l-Mutta-lib's death; 41
 And Byzantium; 42
 Threat to Islamic state of Madi-nah; 46
 Conquest by Muḥammad; 61
 Under the Seljūqīs; 171
 Madīnah; 29, 34, 44, 45, 46
 Mediterranean; 171
 Mencius or Mong Tze:
 His political thought; 8-10
 Theory of Government; 8
 Theory of Kingship, 8-9
 Meshhed; 189
 Minā; 38
 Ministry:
 According to Māwardī; 154-156
 According to Niẓāmu'l-Mulk Ṭūsī; 185
 According to Ghazzālī; 229
 Mobeds; see *Māgīpets*.
 Model City according to Farābī; 123
 Montesquieu; 14, 17, 268
 Moḡal; 99, 173
 Moses; 48, 61, 95, 154
 Muḥājirīn; 45, 222
 Muḥammad, the Apostle of Islam;
 147, 199
 Birth; 29
 Geneological tree; 39 n. 1
 Ancestry; 40 n. 1
 Parentage and early life; 41
 The Ḥilfu'l-Fuḡūl; 42
 Revelation of the first verse of the Qur'ān; 43
 The first pledges; 44
 Moves to Yeṣṣrib or el-Madīnah; 44
 Institution of the Muwākhāt; 45
 The State at Medīna; 45
 Charter to the Jews; 45
 Charter to the Christians; 46
 Unites Arabia under one Law; 46
 The Sermon of Farewell; 47
 Death; 47, 133
 Conquest of Mecca; 61
 Private life; 64, 218
 Views on earning livelihood; 200
 Gives great political impetus; 204
 At Badr; 221
 On slavery; 224
 Need for counsel; 228
 Muḥammad I Bahmanī; 248

286 *Muslim Political Thought and Administration*

- Muḥammad III Bahmanī; 253
 Muḥammad b. Ka'b of Cordova; 216
 Muḥammad Lārī; 240
 Muḥammadābād-Bīdar:
 Maḥmūd Gāwān arrives at; 23
 Political parties at; 135-139
 Khalaf Ḥasan Baḡrī's reception
 after the battle of Ronkher
 Ghāt; 237
 Muḥarrām, tenth of, declared a day
 of mourning; 98
 Muḥibbu'l-lāh; 233
 Mu'izzu'd-Dowlah; 98, 102, 103, 135
 Munthir, king of Hīrah; 34
 Muqtadir, Abbasid Caliph; 98, 192
 Murrah; 40
 Muslims in the tenth and the
 eleventh centuries A. C.; 133 ff.
 Mustakfī, Abbasid Caliph; 134, 135
 Mustaḡfī (Accountant-General); 194
 Mustaḡsim, last Abbasid Caliph of
 Baghdād; 74, 76
 Mustazhir; Abbasid Caliph; 192
 Mu'taḍid, Abbasid Caliph; 223
 Mu'tamid, Abbasid Caliph; 97
 Mūtah, battle of; 162, 173
 Mu'taḡsim, Abbasid Caliph; 69, 73,
 75, 76, 77
 Administration; 70
 Religious toleration; 71
 Hatred of insubordination; 73
 Ibn Abī'r-Rabī's estimate; 76
 Mutenebbī; 97, 101, 137
 Muṭṭī, Abbasid Caliph; 97, 103, 135
 Muttaqī, Abbasid Caliph; 98, 99, 102
- N
- Nadwah; 38-40
 Napoleon; 245
 Naḡīru'd-dīn Ṭūsī; 190
 Naḡīru'd-dīn Maḥmūd; 193
 Nations, causes of their decline
 according to the Qur'ān; 49
 Nationality, Fārābī on; 110
 Naufal; 41
 Nazism; 94
 Negus of Abyssinia; 35
 Nero; 139
 Nestorian Christians; 72
 Ni'matu'l-lāh Kirmanī; 234, 236
 Nīshāpūr; 173, 190
 Nizāmīyah University; 173, 187, 190
 Nizāmu'd-dīn Aḥmad III Bahmanī;
 234, 238
 Nizāmu'l-Mulk Ṭūsī; 137, 170-183,
 190, 199, 230, 231
 Political conditions; 171
 Early life; 171
 Titles; 172
 Founder of the Nizāmīyah Uni-
 versity; 173
 Political works; 173
 Historical perspective; 174
 Method of argument; 175
 Comparison with European
 authors; 178
 A member of the Government;
 178
 The institution of Kingship; 178-
 180
 State officials; 180-182
 Revenue administration; 181
 Judges; 182
 Ambassadors; 182, 273
 Espionage; 183
 Ministry; 185
 Views on historical science; 185
 An estimate; 186
 Martyrdom; 187
 Comparison with Māwardī and
 Kaikā'ūs; 187
 His administrative machine; 193

Comparison with Ghazzālī; 213, 230
 Nizāmu'l-Mulk, the Bahmanī minister; 241
 Nobility, the Qur'an on; 63
 Nova Roma; see *Byzantium*
 Nūru'd-dīn Zangī; 103

O

Obedience, doctrine of; 53, 54, 55
 Oikonomikos; 77
 Opposition, His Majesty's; 3
 Oxus; 136, 172

P

Padgoshān; 27
 Palestine; 47
 Panjab; 10
 Papacy; 132, 139, 141, 197
 Patria Potestas; 34
 Patriarchal theory of Fārābī; 123, 262
 Pedro the Cruel; 16
 Perception and Experience according to Ghazzālī; 198
 Persia; see *Īrān*
 Phocas, Byzantine Emperor; 32
 Phocas, the Patrician; 32
 Physical background of Politics, Ibn Khaldūn on; 17
 Plato; 1, 21, 31, 68, 70, 87 n. 1, 104, 113, 114, 116, 117, 118, 122, 131, 177, 272
 Political Rights; 140-142
 Political Society, causes of formation of; 123
 Politics, Relation to Ethics according to Ghazzālī; 199
Ghazzālī's definition and place among the Sciences; 202, 209

Pope of Rome; see *Papacy*
 Porphyry; 96, 106
 Portugal; 132
 Powers of Man according to Fārābī; 109
 Prisoners of War, the Qur'an on; 60
 Provincial administration under the Abbasids; 145
 According to Ghazzālī; 228
 According to Fārābī; 228
 Ptolemy; 104
 Punishment; Kauṭilya's theory; 14
 In *Īrān*; 28
 Pyrenees; 133

Q

Qābūs b. Washmgīr; 136, 166
 Qābūs Nāmah; 165-170
 Why compiled; 166
 Its contents; 167-169
 Proximity of the royal person; 167
 Ministership; 167
 Kingship; 168
 Its method; 168-170
 Compared to Ghazzālī's works 230
 Compared to Maḥmūd Gāwān's theories; 245
 Qāḍīs; 71, 144
 Qādir, Abbasid Caliph; 135 n. 2
 Qāhir, Abbasid Caliph; 198
 Qaḥṭān; 33
 Qaḥṭānīs; 34, 35, 37
 Qāim, Abbasid Caliph; 136, 192
 Qāsim Beg Ṣafshikan; 238
 Qāwān; 232
 Qualities of good Muslims in the Qur'an; 58
 Quraish; 38
 Qur'an; Illustrations given by Nizāmu'l-Mulk Tūsī; 175

288 *Muslim Political Thought and Administration*

- In Maḥmūd Gāwān's political thought; 244
- Qur'ānic State; 23-65
- Difficulty of the problem; 23
- The antecedents; 24-42
- Essence of the Qur'ānic State; 42-65
- Contents of the Qur'ān; 43
- Qur'ānic argument; 47
- Causes of the decline of nations; 49
- God the Ruler; 49, 50
- Justice, main duty of kings and magistrates; 51
- Principles of order; 52
- Law and justice; 54-56, 161
- Scope of legislation; 55
- Social reform; 56
- Place of counsel; 58
- Taxation; 58
- Laws of war; 59, 60
- Toleration; 61-63
- Internationalism; 63-65
- Classes and ranks; 63
- Human barriers overcome; 64
- Principles of sovereignty; 85 n. 1
- Qusāī; 38, 40
- R
- Raḍī, Abbasid Caliph; 98, 102
- Rāiq made amīr; 102
- Rāichūr; 248
- Rāingnā; 240
- Rājahmundri; 240, 249
- Religion as a bond of union; 142, 211
- Revolution, Ibn Abī'r-Rabī' on; 89
- Riḍā Shāh Pahlavī; 245
- Rifaḍah; 38
- Rights of the people, Ibnu'l-Jamā'ah on; 267
- Roman paterfamilias compared to Arab Shaikh; 36
- Rome, fall of; 66
- Ronkheṛ Ghat, battle of; 237
- Rousseau; 1, 205 n. 1, 209
- S
- Sadaqah; 158
- Saffāh, Abbasid Caliph; 192
- Ṣafwān; 41
- Ṣāhibu'l-Maẓālim; 71
- Saif b. thī Ḥazan el-Ḥumairī; 35
- Saifu'd-Dowlah, 'Alī b. 'Abdī'l-Haija; 99-101, 102, 104, 107, 119
- Samarrah; 72
- Ṣamūd; 47
- Ṣan'a; 37
- Sangameshwar; 240
- Saul, King of Israel; 48
- Saxony, forced conversions in; 61
- Secret service; According to Nizāmū'l-Mulk Ṭūsī; 183
- According to Ghazzālī; 224
- Seljūq; 136
- Seljūqīs; 136, 137, 138, 145, 170, 186 192-194
- "Seven Monarchies" of China; 8
- Seville; 16
- Shādāb; 189
- Shāh Nāmāh; 189
- Shaikh, position of Arabian; 36
- Shamsu'd-dīn; 232
- Shantung; 5
- Shi'ah dynasties, rise of; 97, 98
- Shihābu'd-dīn Aḥmad I Bahmanī; 236, 239
- Sifarah; 40
- Sikandar Khān; 238
- Siqāyah; 38
- Sirkā, Rāja of Konkan; 238
- Slave Kings of India; 245 n. 1

Slavery :

According to Ibn Abī'r-Rabī' ; 92

In Islam ; 93

According to Ghazzālī ; 132, 141, 223

Social reform in the Qur'ān ; 56

Sovereign, conception of, in the East ; 3

Sovereignty ; 53, 266-268

Ibn Abī'r-Rabī's theory of ; 84

Fārābī's conception of, 113-119, 131, 266-268

Plato on the ideal sovereign ; 113

Ghazzālī on ; 113, 115, 116, 128, 209

In the time of the later Abbasids ; 138

Ibnū'l-Jamā'ah on ; 266

The Muslim ideal ; 266

Nizāmu'l-Mulk Tūsī on ; 267

Spahpad ; 26, 27

Spain ; 15, 61, 197

Sparta ; 21, 164, 177

Spencer ; 212, 213

State, life of, according to Ibn Khaldūn ; 9

Qur'ānic conception of ; 23-55

Officers of, advised to study ; 84, 95

Place of, in human groupings ; 111

Fārābī on the model State ; 115-117

Patriarchal theory ; 123, 262

Motives for its formation 123-125, 151

Varieties of ; 125-129

Capitalism in ; 140

Basis in various epochs ; 140-142

Offices appertaining to ; 180, 182

Controversy of the Christian church with ; 197

Development of the State idea ; 204-207

State, Theory of ; 257-260

Fārābī on ; 115-117, 122, 125, 204-207, 257, 261, 264-266

Māwardī on ; 152-154, 258

Ghazzālī on ; 199-202, 259

State, Origin of ; 260-266

Fārābī on ; 110-112, 260-263

Ibnū'l-Jamā'ah on ; 263

Ibn Khaldūn on ; 18-20, 263

Ghazzālī on ; 205, 210, 264-266

Force as origin of ; 263

State, Sovereignty in ; 266-268

Fārābī on ; 113, 115, 116, 128

The Muslim ideal ; 266

Ibnū'l-Jamā'ah on ; 266

Nizāmu'l-Mulk on ; 267

State, Form of ; 268-272

Ibn Khaldūn on ; 268

Fārābī on ; 115-117, 169-173

State of Ignorance according to Fārābī ; 129

Stoa of Athens suppressed ; 31

Subuktagīn ; 136

Sufiyān-i Šūrī ; 228

Sulaimān Durrānī ; 201

Sulūku'l-Mālik fī tadbīrī'l-Mamālik ; 69 ff.

Supreme Head in the State according to Fārābī ; 116, 117, 119, 121, 124, 125

Sutlej ; 10

Syria ; 34, 230

T

Ṭabaristān ; 136

Taxes : In Irān ; 28

In Byzantium ; 30

According to the Qur'ān ; 58

Māwardī on ; 161

Ghazzālī on ; 220

Theocracy, its significance ; 50, 51

Theodora, Byzantine Empress ; 31, 72

290 *Muslim Political Thought and Administration*

Theodosius the Great, Byzantine Emperor; 32

Theophilus, Byzantine Emperor; 72

Thimmis; 142, 143, 144, 156, 158

Tilangānā; 248, 249

Timūr; 76

Tlemcen; 15

Todarmal; 252

Toleration: in the Qur'an; 61-63

According to Ibn Abī'r-Rabī'; 94

Under Saifu'd-Dowlah; 100, 101, 119

Translation of Greek works into Arabic; 100

Transoxania; 236

Ts'in; 7, 9

Tughraī; 194

Tughral Beg; 136

Tunis; 15

Turkey; 236

Turkish influence over the Caliphate; 138

Turkistān; 164, 165

Tūs; 170, 173, 189, 190, 220 n. 2

U

Uḥūd; 61

'Umar b. 'Abdīl-'Azīz, Umayyad Caliph; 162, 216, 221.

'Umar b. Khattāb, Second Caliph; 34, 40, 157, 162, 218, 219, 225, 228

'Umar-i-Khayyām; 171, 187

Umayyah; 41

Universal or Divine Law, implications of; 50, 53, 56, 57, 60, 64

'Uṣmān b. 'Affān, Third Caliph; 218

'Uṣmān b. Huwairis; 42

'Uṣmān b. Talḥah; 40

V

Vijayanagar; 236, 238

Vishnūgupta; see Kauṭilya

W

Wāqidi; 69

Warangal; 242, 249

Warfare, principles of, in the Qur'an; 52, 59

Wāsij; 96

Wazīr of Delegation; 155

Of Execution; 155

Importance according to Māwardī 163

Among the Seljūqīs; 194

Wazīrate, decline in the time of the Abbasids; 102

According to Māwardī; 154

During the Seljūqī rule; 194

According to Ghazzālī; 229

Wealth, problem of, according to Ibn Abī'r-Rabī'; 91

William the Conqueror of England; 175, 251

X

Ximenes, Archbishop of Granada; 139

Y

Yamāmah; 34

Yaqṭān; 33

Yemen; 34, 35

Yeṣrib: see *Madīnah*

Yuhannā b. Jilād; 96

Yūsuf 'Ādil Khān; 242

Yūsuf thū Nawās, King of Yemen; 35

Z

Zaid b. Ṣābit; 64, 162

Zainab; 64

Zakāt; 59, 158

Zoroastrianism; 100 n. 2

Zeno; 32